

PRACTICAL HORSEMANSHIP

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A PRACTICAL HORSEMAN
(From a Sketch by "Snaffles")

PRACTICAL HORSEMANSHIP

*A BOOK FOR THE NOVICE OF ALL
AGES, WITH CHAPTERS ON ADVANCED
WORK AND PRACTICAL HINTS
ON HORSE AND PONY BUYING*

By

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WITH

PHOTOGRAPHS, SKETCHES AND DIAGRAMS

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PREFACE

AFTER hesitating for a long time before daring to write on such a controversial subject as riding, I happened one day to glance through the Preface of a well-known book on the subject. In it the author stated that he based his knowledge on the training of over 400 horses and ponies.

Having had a similar experience with more than four times that number of young horsemen, I venture "to commit this book."

J. L. M. B.

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PRACTICAL HORSEMANSHIP

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

How many people really enjoy riding? How many honestly delight in every minute they are on a horse's back? How many, in fact, get all that is to be got out of this fascinating pastime? The man so often seen out hunting, jumping fences with set expression of hands as well as face, is surely not participating in the best sport in the world? Just watch him now, as he sees an obstacle rather unexpectedly, and realises that in front of so many people it has either to be jumped or funkcd. Cramming his hat on his head, he shortens up the reins in the left hand. With a great deal of preliminary agitation of arms, legs and body, he sets his horse off at a much quicker pace than he really intended. He has then just time to give him a good thwack with the confused tangle of his whip, lie back, and hope for the best.

We will draw a veil over his appearance in mid-air! Accidents will happen in the best regulated families. But we cannot help noticing his descent. The reins, so carefully shortened beforehand, are still held firm. The horse has consequently been severely jogged in the mouth. In revenge, he has half-pulled his rider out of the saddle. Master's feet and legs being well forward, and his body well back, from the moment he sighted the jump, he has had no chance of retaining that firm seat so eloquently described by the lady novelist. Everybody, in fact, looks most uncomfortable. Is he enjoying himself? One look at his gasping face is sufficient answer.

Compare him with his neighbour who jumped the same fence a little lower down. Not being busy riding, this man saw the fence the first possible moment, and immediately selected the spot he intended to jump. Then swerving out so as to take on the obstacle exactly square, he pushed his horse gradually into a good fast canter. There was no fuss or tenseness. The horse had done the same thing many times before. But he had never been jogged on the mouth, or *not* allowed to go sufficiently fast to clear the ditch on the far side. He was, therefore, keen, and put up a perfect performance, giving his master an easy ride into the bargain. The man, also, did not seem to be doing anything extraordinary, or to indicate by those violent movements of body, arms and legs, that something unusual was going to take place.

The last few strides, perhaps, he seemed to urge the horse to a slightly extra effort; and though allowing sufficient rein for the animal to get his head well out, he yet retained enough to control him. There were none of the rough, jerky movements of the other man.

This man, in fact, poised his body (we won't argue "forward" or "backward" seat here), in such a way as to be able to do these things. Even on top of the fence he was sufficiently himself to realise what was going on around him, and to be ready for any emergency. Again, we cannot help noticing him in the next field swinging and balancing to the movement of his horse; how he sweeps along ready to stop, turn, or take a fence in an apparently effortless fashion.

No need to ask if *he* is enjoying himself. Such perfect harmony between horse and rider is the real thing.

But to get the best out of riding means much more than clearing a few fences in good style. An eye for a horse and a pride in him are both essential. The knowledge, from careful inspection before mounting, that one's horse is sound; that one's saddlery is in good order; that neither girth nor stirrup leathers are likely to split under the strain. All these are part of the business of riding.

To know at once from the feel of a horse how well or how badly he has been trained; to spot from his make and shape what he is likely to do under various circumstances; to appreciate his long, swinging walk almost as

much as his more exciting paces; these are the things that make riding with some people a veritable passion.

Not everybody is in a position to get the best out of riding, nor realise what they are missing. Some are too rich (poor devils) ever to realise the full value of the animal they have so easily bought. Others are too poor to do anything but pound about on an occasional hireling.

The majority, however, having heard early in life that horsemen are born and not made, soon decide that they personally belong to the first category, and that there is, therefore, nothing further for them to learn. These men can be seen in scores in any hunting-field or polo ground, consistently ruining horses' mouths with complete unconcern.

It is to these men, or rather to their children that this book is chiefly addressed, with the conviction, based on experience, that a sound system of early instruction not only doubles the enjoyment in riding, but produces astonishing results in a very short time.

CHAPTER II

AGE, SHAPE AND TEMPERAMENT

THOUGH excellent in every way for nerve, balance and familiarising oneself with horses, it still remains to be proved that children who ride from extreme youth necessarily become better horsemen than those who take to it later in life.

In riding, as in swimming, running, etc., there is a personal limit of efficiency beyond which no one can go. It would be hard to say, for instance, that Col. Malise Graham or Col. Geoffrey Brooke, to mention two famous horsemen, are any better to-day than they were before the War.

For a boy, it is a physical impossibility to reach this limit. His muscles, not being sufficiently developed, are unable to cope with anything bigger than a pony, or an exceedingly quiet horse. Young men, on the other hand, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, seem able to go straight ahead from the elementary stages right up to advanced equitation, until they finally reach that point when experience alone can teach them.

This is in no way meant to discourage early riding. Far from it. There is no finer exercise going, and an early beginning certainly induces familiarity, and therefore confidence in horses. Those people are lucky, therefore, who can start early.

It is meant, however, to show that those who have been unable to ride when young need never despair of becoming good horsemen. There are numerous cases of men who did not begin riding until well over twenty-five or even later not only becoming good horsemen but looking as though they had been at it all their lives.

To anyone learning to ride, there is nothing so helpful as the possession of what is known as a "good build for a horse."

This does not mean that to ride well one has to be one of those long, attenuated creatures, who show with pride, if not actually boasting of "two feet of leather below the knee," nor yet the jockey-like and somewhat stunted youth invariably seen in patched breeches and a high-neck sweater of brilliant hue. In one case, the legs are probably so long as to be too weak. In the other, they are apt to be so short as either to bang the saddle flaps or an unaccustomed part of the horse's side; in both cases with obvious results.

No, the man well-built for riding is a nice mixture of the two, with several other things thrown in. His legs may be long and thin compared with, say, a Rugby forward,

but they must be flat on the inside of the thigh and exceedingly strong. Powerful shoulder and chest development also is unessential, unless it is particularly desired to stop runaway horses. In fact, the less body above the saddle, the better.

A man built in this way has a great advantage over his fellows. He quickly learns to look easy and graceful in the saddle. His flat, muscular thighs give him an excellent grip, which allows him to take his mind from the awful thought of coming off. He can then concentrate on the best means of controlling his horse, a feat which soon becomes almost second nature. After this, when people see him they will say: "So and so rides well," and they are probably right, but not necessarily so. For there is one more attribute without which no one can wholly earn that title, and that is—Temperament. The great value of build, however, has always been appreciated, especially by those who teach riding. Not so long ago, when inspecting a ride of recruits, the colonel of a certain regiment commented somewhat tersely to the sergeant-major on the slow progress of Lord X, a recently joined subaltern. "Yes, sir," replied the sergeant-major. "But then, sir, his lordship's a very funny shape, sir!"

But to return to this subject of Temperament, what is it? A man built on bolder or more erratic lines than those indicated above, yet possessing this priceless gift

of temperament, is frequently more than able to compensate for any physical failing. It is an attribute which has more to do with success in riding than almost anything else.

Tact, sympathy, sensitiveness, deftness coupled with determination, all come under this heading. In any collection of horsemen, one sees these qualities, or more often the lack of them, aptly illustrated. There is, for instance, the man who, though well able to control and ride his horse, seems to expend about five times as much energy as necessary in doing so. Scarlet in the face and excited in manner, he soon conveys his *feelings* to his horse, thereby storing up trouble for the future.

Then the opposite extreme, the slow fellow who realises everything just too late. His horse is obviously going to run out at the fence. What does he do? Nothing. Simply because he is not sufficiently sensitive to the impressions the horse gives him. Another type is the man who is quite aware of what is going to happen, but seems unwilling to display sufficient energy and determination to prevent it. The last performer we will mention here is the man who knows quite well what to do, but whose limbs are so clumsy as to prove less of a help than a hindrance.

Indeed, the above list seems so formidable that we are half tempted to cross it out for fear of discouraging the

beginner. But this is only a criticism of those who have probably never had their mistakes pointed out. In riding, as in everything else, a right start is half the battle. Sound instruction in the early stages is the sure foundation for confidence and good horsemanship.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST FEW LESSONS

RIDING, like everything else, should be taught systematically. It can, of course, be "picked up"; but a lot of ineradicable faults are likely to be picked up at the same time. It is just as easy, in fact easier, to learn to ride well as badly. The man who starts on the right lines finds himself duly prepared for the later stages, whereas he whose early faults have been neglected will be up against it all his life.

When starting to teach a beginner the first thing to do is to get him mounted. This startling truism is by way of emphasising that now is *not* the time to teach him about a horse's colour, shape, age, saddlery, ailments, or the hundred and one things that can be learnt as we go along. Later, perhaps, when a little tired, or even sore, he will enjoy learning what boots to get and where to buy them, how to avoid heavy, creaking saddles, bridles covered in brass buckles, and all the rest of the mental equipment so necessary to the young "horsey man."

So, to mount, come quietly up to the horse on the near side. If you come from behind he may kick you, not necessarily from dislike, but from a feeling of self-protection. The horse's head is probably being held by a groom so he cannot see behind him. He kicks, as it were, to get his shot in first, and a kick from a horse comes when least expected and generally means a broken bone or worse.

Having, therefore, approached the horse, pat him; take the end of the reins, which should be lying flat and smooth on his neck, in the right hand and hold them over the withers. Then slide the fingers of the left hand into the reins, the little finger between the two left ones and the middle finger between the two right ones, the palm of the hand downwards, and throw the spare ends to the offside. Now, turning towards the horse's tail, place the left foot in the stirrup, steadying it with the right hand. The left-hand is meanwhile checking the horse and making him stand still. Grasping the back of the saddle with the right hand, and momentarily holding the horse's mane or crest with the left, the rider should swing himself lightly into the saddle. It is important to make the horse stand still, not only whilst mounting, but until given the office to move off.

Having mounted, the reins should be taken up with both hands. The third finger of the right hand between the two outside reins, while the left hand, though still

holding all four reins, should yet allow sufficient play on the two right ones to permit of both hands being held abreast.

The correct way to hold the reins is, within obvious limits, a matter of opinion. Some people prefer the snaffle reins outside, others the curb. For young riders, however, the former method is probably better.

Everyone should become handy at manipulating the reins, shortening and lengthening them quickly, and so on. It is sometimes necessary to ride with all four reins in one hand, right or left as the case may be. If the rider cannot change his reins quickly the horse soon gets fussed and excited.

The stirrups, which should be twisted half a turn outwards, ought to be taken without looking down. If they are taken properly *from the outside* the leather will lie smooth against the lower leg.

This question of looking down will arise later, and might as well, therefore, be dealt with at once. Looking down implies firstly, lack of confidence, and secondly, alters the balance of a rider, an important item in such early stages. Both of these affect the horse. The best place to look in riding, on almost all occasions, is straight ahead.

The stirrups should have been roughly fitted before mounting. This can be done by putting the points of the fingers under the buckle on the saddle and ensuring that the stirrups are long enough for the iron to reach the

armpit. When mounted, they should be fitted by grasping the spare end of the leather, pulling it upwards, at the same time pressing downwards in the iron with the foot. The required length can be obtained by pulling with the hand or pressing downwards with the foot, the forefinger guiding the tongue of the buckle into the right hole. The disengaged hand, whether right or left, meanwhile holds the reins as for riding, to keep the horse still. The stirrup buckle must always be pulled right up to the catch on the saddle, and the spare end of the leather tucked away underneath and pointing to the rear.

The best place to start learning to ride is in a school or closed *manège*; failing which the lungeing or leading-rein must be used. *It is of the utmost importance to make the beginner always feel he is perfectly safe, and cannot be run away with.*

The detailed correctness of mounting and fitting stirrups need not be gone into during the first few lessons. The main point is to get the pupil on the move, and make him enjoy it all as much as possible.

He should be made to follow the instructor round the school at a walk, and soon after, at a trot. This necessitates no effort on his part, and a whole string of quiet horses will follow a leader round the walls of the school in this way.

A lungeing or leading-rein makes matters even easier, but only allows of one or two people being taught at a time. Beginners, unless quite small children, generally learn to rise in their stirrups in one or two lessons, and can be allowed to canter in this follow-my-leader fashion for a few minutes every day. Exercises of this sort, walking, trotting and cantering, may continue from three up to ten lessons before anything more serious is attempted, simply to give confidence and amusement according to the age and condition of the riders.

These detailed instructions may seem superfluous to all those who have long forgotten that they ever had to learn to ride, and who probably did so at the expense of a series of alarming and unaccountable falls. Others might call it all damned nonsense, and prefer the method of the old sergeant-major who said to the recruit: "What? Never ridden before? Well, there's an 'orse that's never *been* ridden before. So you can both start together."

CHAPTER IV

THE SEAT

IN modern equitation riding is usually taught in two successive stages, the Passive and the Active.

In the Passive Stage all efforts should be concentrated on acquiring a firm and independent seat. When this has been successfully achieved the rider is then taught to ride actively, that is to say, to control his horse and make it definitely do what he wants at all times. Whilst in the Passive Stage, however, the rider should not be expected to show anything beyond the barest minimum of control; no more than is necessary to steer a horse round a riding school, or *at* a jump. He must be mounted, accordingly, on a quiet and willing animal.

At the end of the Passive Stage the rider should be able to sit a horse easily and comfortably, going freely at all kinds of obstacles at different paces without stirrups or reins and in good style. The horse at this stage is one that does not require horsemanship as it is generally understood, and the rider is simply expected to follow its movements wherever it goes.

The reason for insisting on these two stages is to ensure steady progression, and never to ask of the rider what he is incapable or only partially capable of doing.

Those who can remember being made to jump a small ditch or a hurdle during one of their first rides, knowing they had not the smallest control of the horse or the power *to stick on*, the terror they were filled with at the time and the curious twisted positions they adopted to delay their fall, will fully understand this.

If riding is taught properly there should be no reason for fear, as no one is asked to do what he has not been well prepared for. In any case, fear is definitely bad for riding: not only does it cause loss of muscular control, but also lack of confidence, which is speedily transmitted to the horse. Bad riding, and ugly positions in the saddle, will then be the least results.

Apart from the question of fear, no one should be asked, or even allowed, to ride difficult horses or start active riding before they are ready to do so because—(1) they are liable to strain, (2) they will be compelled to make the most violent exertions to do what they want, which again results in ugly positions.

Some people, as we observed before, are particularly adapted to the saddle. But it is quite possible for almost anyone taught in the right way to get a really useful seat in about sixty to eighty lessons, provided they work at it and do not ride about at haphazard.



PLATE I

A GOOD SEAT

(Note alignment of toe, knee and nuchal cord)

The expression, "a good seat on a horse," is one that is often loosely used; and as our chief endeavour for some time to come will be to acquire one, it might be as well to try and define here exactly what it is.

For anyone to have a good seat they must not only be able to ride well, but *look* as though they can ride well. For instance, a man may stick his legs forward, his toes down and "hail a cab" with his right hand, though quite successfully negotiating his fences at the same time, but he can hardly be said to have a good seat. No one would want him held up as a pattern.

Plate I is an excellent illustration of a good seat.

Starting from the head, which is neither braced back nor poked forward, the body and back are as they should be, straight or, if anything, slightly rounded.

Contrary to military ideas of a generation ago, the back must never be hollowed. However smart this over-erect position may at first appear, the fact remains that if the back is hollowed the rider cannot sit properly in the saddle, that is to say with his seat underneath him. By adopting this unnatural style he is forced to ride on his fork. There would be no objection to his riding in this way were it not for the fact that in so doing the rider automatically loses a great part of the strength of his legs and therefore also his balance.

This is easy to prove by watching a beginner in difficulties for the first time. Owing to his inability to keep his seat underneath him, his body has a tendency to get forward and his legs to get behind him, where they are completely useless either for helping him *to stick on* or to give the necessary aids to the horse.

Any seat, therefore, that starts off by not sitting correctly in the saddle is meeting trouble half-way, and should be strongly avoided.

To get the correct seat and position of the legs, sit comfortably in the saddle with the seat underneath the body and the back slightly rounded. Stretch the legs down straight as far as they will go and pause. Now roll the knees into the horse, gripping with the knee and thigh at the same time. (If this movement has been correctly done two things should have happened. One, the knees instead of being straight beneath the rider become raised up, giving the upper part of the leg the correct appearance in the saddle. Secondly, the fleshy part of the thigh instead of being against the horse and so impeding the knee grip becomes left behind leaving the flat part there instead.)

Now close the lower part of the legs to the horse's sides drawing them back slightly to do so. Turn the toes up as much as possible and out to an angle of not more than 45°. To keep this position is a difficult matter for the beginner, but if the stirrups have been carefully adjusted

beforehand to the correct length, or even a hole shorter for extra support, it will soon come to him.

The position can be checked by the rider glancing down without bending forward, when he should just be able to see the tip of his toes over his knees. The beginner will, of course, instantly lose this position as soon as the horse moves; his toes will turn down, his knee out, and the fleshy part of the thigh again prevent the proper grip, but with constant practice and the above picture in mind it will gradually become almost second nature.

The whole position is a natural one which encourages the greatest grip combined with free use of the lower part of the legs. The toes should be raised as, apart from appearance, this action braces the muscles of the calf and helps the rider to grip properly. The grip extends in practice from as high as possible inside the thigh to the knee, and except when the lower legs are applied to give the aids to the horse, to about half-way down the *inside* of the lower leg.

One writer on the subject states that grip is unnecessary, and that the rider should maintain himself in the saddle by balance from the knee and stirrup iron only.

He would, no doubt, be correct if any human being could be found quick enough to anticipate the movements of any horse on any occasion. But is there anybody so constituted? Even the best horsemen have been *left behind* at a fence that they knew they were going to jump in the

next second; what is going to happen to the average man when his horse shies or jumps unexpectedly over a blind ditch? Balance alone would not save him. Again, how many women riders astride obviously lacking the powerful grip and flat thighs of a man, ever succeed in becoming first-class horsewomen? And why, if grip is so unnecessary, was the sidesaddle ever adopted?

It is quite possible to balance a billiard cue upright in the palm of the hand, but a much more certain way is to grip it and hold it aloft. Though it is far too tiring when riding to grip hard the whole time, the grip is a useful, and indeed an essential, reserve for emergencies. When balance has been lost nothing can restore it but grip or the reins. For our horses' sake we prefer the grip.

Though the actual use of the hands will be dealt with later on, their position, forming as it does such an important part in the general appearance of the seat, should be mentioned here. No part of the seat, which we defined as the whole look of a man in the saddle, is so difficult to get looking right or so noticeable if wrong as the hands. Moreover, it is impossible to lay down an exact position for them, as it varies with every movement of the horse's head, with different horses and their different paces. Generally speaking, the hands will be in the right position if, when holding the reins as long as possible and low down on the withers, the rider has full control of his horse. Until the rider fully understands the function of the hands and legs,

in fact the whole theory of Active Riding, it is a mistake to worry too much about them, as the tendency will then be *to set them* rigidly in one place, thus making them look worse than if nothing had been said at all.

The seat, at all paces and movements of the horse, is based on the above picture. The rider may momentarily lose or alter the position shown in the photograph where the rider is *well down* in the saddle, as for instance when rising at the trot, but he must be capable of reverting to it again. As will be seen later, it is this position which gives him his strength in the saddle, and allows him to use his legs, hands and weight independently. The rider must first have complete control over himself before he can control the horse. The seat is, therefore, the foundation of horsemanship. When trotting, the rider can rise in the stirrups or sit down in the saddle and keep the position outlined above. It is only necessary to sit down when likely to jump, turn or do anything where the rider needs his full powers to control the horse. Otherwise it is much more comfortable to rise in the saddle at the trot. When rising in the stirrups, the rider rises as each near fore or each off fore comes to the ground. After very short practice this becomes natural and automatic. He must lean the body over the hands, allowing it to rise with the horse's action rather than make any violent movements on his own account. With the exception of this movement, the whole body should remain as steady as before. Nothing

looks worse than to see people doing a great deal of work at this pace, getting up and sitting down in the saddle, raising the hands up and down and so on. At the walk and canter also the rider should sit *down* in the saddle, using the suppleness of the body and hips to prevent being bumped up and down. As in Plate I, though the position should be a thoroughly comfortable one, with the seat well underneath the body, the rider should never slouch. It is quite possible to be smart without being stiff, and supple without being sloppy.

At one time it was considered essential for a horseman to keep his elbows glued to his sides and his toes turned strictly to the front. These fixed rules, like many others that have been forced to stand inquiry and criticism, no longer hold good. Though it is very unsightly to see a man's elbows stuck out each side like a pair of bellows, it is quite opposed to modern ideas to have them fixed to the sides, thus preventing the free use of the arms. Turning the toes straight to the front definitely militates against the grip and the full use of the riding muscles. These have their maximum power when the foot is turned out to its natural angle which may be as much as 45°.

Having now described the seat in detail, it is necessary to add that all parts of the body in addition to being in the right place, must also be supple and independent of one another. The hands, for instance, should be capable of moving, following or resisting the movements of the

horse's head without any effect on the position of the body. Again, the rider should be able to sway his body to the movements of the horse without finding it necessary to shoot his legs forward as so many people do on landing over a fence.

The quickest way to obtain suppleness is to practise Swedish exercises mounted. These can be done progressively at a standstill, walk, trot or canter as the rider becomes more expert, and a suitable list is given in Appendix II.

People who have ridden for years, possibly hunted and played polo, acquire naturally grip, balance and suppleness to a varying extent. Those who have not been so fortunate, but wish to become reasonably good horsemen in the shortest time possible, must be prepared for a good deal of hard work instead.

Short but frequent periods of trotting without stirrups, plenty of Passive Jumping with and without stirrups speedily produce astonishing results, giving the rider a confidence that would otherwise take him years to acquire, not to mention the money saved on horseflesh. For instead of ruining his horses during the first ten years of his riding career, as many people do, he is, or will be after a few months, in a fair way to improve them.

The following is a typical lesson given in the Passive Stage, based on the ideas previously set out. The intention is to concentrate on giving the rider a firm, supple, and independent seat in the shortest time possible. This

lesson can be made easy or difficult according to the state of the beginner, but generally speaking sixty to eighty lessons will be found sufficient to produce the required results. The chief thing to avoid is rushing the instruction—particularly in jumping. Keen beginners are often more tired even after a short time than they care to admit. It may take months to give some a good grip, but it is better to go slowly at first than push on to a stage for which the beginner is not ready.

The Lesson

- 5 minutes: Seat position and general appearance, at walk, trot and canter. If no instructor is available the beginner can check his own appearance in front of a mirror generally found in riding schools, and compare it with his mental picture of well-known horsemen.
- 10 minutes: Trotting, cantering, cantering *out* without stirrups. Taking the stirrups for rests when absolutely necessary. The horse can be made to change the rein, that is, to go the opposite way round the school to before.
- 10 minutes: Physical training mounted.
For exercises see Appendix II.
- 5 minutes: Dismount and rest.
- 30 minutes: Passive Jumping including frequent rests.

The beginner will naturally lose his position continually almost at once. Special care should be taken, either by his instructor or himself, to stop frequently and get into the right position all over again instead of continuing on in a bad one which might become a habit.

CHAPTER V

ELEMENTARY JUMPING: SEAT AND POSITION OF THE BODY OVER A FENCE

For one reason or another old books say very little about jumping. There are a few remarks such as "a horse should be ridden over a fence with spirit and determination," or "throw your heart across and you will get over," but nothing much of an explanatory nature. Possibly this was because show-jumping, where a horse *has* to be presented correctly to ensure success, had not been invented. In any case, there is always so much disagreement about even this part of jumping, i.e. the presenting part as opposed to the seat part, that both sections need the closest examination. In this chapter it will be assumed, therefore, that the horse has been presented correctly, and the actual seat and position of the body (not the hands) are being carefully observed.

Nothing has been the subject of more controversy in riding than the adoption of what most people call the Forward Seat. Just as for years people railed at the new-

fangled methods of Tod Sloan on the race-course, so many people rail to-day at this comparatively new idea of jumping. It is hard to believe, in view of the equally good performances put up by well-known exponents in the hunting field, at point-to-points, steeplechases, or big show-jumping competitions, that such diehards still exist. But it is so; and their ideas are worth mentioning *en passant* as a warning to the present generation.

Though few people can be found who will volunteer to give a plain demonstration of the old-fashioned Hunting Seat, it approximately amounted to this. As the horse approached the fence the rider leant slightly back, as though to postpone the evil moment. On rising, he leant back more, more on top of the fence, and still more as he landed. He was then finally pitched back to an upright position.

The whole performance looked very wrong and rough, chiefly because the rider was fighting balance. First of all, to lean back at the approach, even slightly, is unnecessary. To lean back as the horse rises, means that the rider must prevent himself falling back by a strong grasp of his reins. This raises the horse's head, who then brings his hind legs to the ground much more quickly than he would naturally do. He thus lands on all fours like a cat, with disastrous results if there is a wide ditch on the far side of the fence.

Now on descending, the rider was forced to lie right back to meet the quarters coming up, but not having slipped

his reins before as he was holding on by them, he gave his horse an unpleasant jolt in the mouth. The result of all this was that the horse became either (1) a confirmed refuser, or (2) that despicable type of animal that would not jump in cold blood, or (3) he put up with it, and was worth a fortune to real bad horsemen with a lot of money.

It is a significant fact that the majority of artists have quite given up depicting riders leaning back over fences as they used to do in old Sporting Prints. In these the riders are invariably seen sitting well back, with their whips high above their heads in a very life-like imitation of the modern "cab-caller."

The camera, also, has helped to clear up the matter. Any photographs of point-to-point and steeplechase fences aptly illustrate both ideas—forward or backward, at the same time clearly showing the different effects on the horses.

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion about what the Forward Seat really is. Some people think that it is shown by anyone who leans forward as the horse rises to a fence. This is not really so at all. Everyone must do this if they are to keep properly balanced.

The Forward Seat, which has long been fashionable on the Continent, means not only that the rider leans forward as the horse rises, but leans forward, with his seat right out of the saddle on top of the fence, and is still leaning forward on the descent (see Plate XII). This is done

with the idea, right or wrong, of making certain that his horse's hind feet do not touch a lath. Naturally, as half a fault from a lath means complete disaster to a show-jumper, he is going to make absolutely certain of not getting left behind, be it ever so slightly, and of clearing the fence with his hind feet, by possibly exaggerating the forward position. Furthermore, he has to be ready at once for the next fence which in show-jumping comes all too quickly after the last one. It would take far too long to slip the reins through the fingers and gather them up again, which is what happens to the average rider if he gets "left."

The real Forward Seat then is the Show-jumping Seat. Now in show-jumping both take off and landing ground are perfect. The horse takes off so many feet in front of a fence and lands so many feet beyond it. The rider always knows exactly what he is going to do and what the landing is like. The conditions across country are very different. The rider can see this side of the fence but has no idea what the landing is like. There may be a drop and the horse may peck. The rider is then very liable to "come it." He must therefore sit very differently to compete with fresh conditions. The way he sits may be called the Normal Seat for the sake of explanation.

The Normal Seat then is for the ordinary man who has no tremors about laths and half faults, but simply

wants to ride over the fence with the greatest comfort to himself and his horse, combined with the utmost control.

Now the position of the body over a fence is a matter of balance, and balance admits of no argument. Either there is balance or there isn't. The correct position over a fence is a question of balance on the move, and naturally varies over different obstacles, different horses and different speeds. It is only acquired by practice, but anyone can test for himself the principles advanced here, and illustrated by Plates II, III and IV. That the horse is being ridden bareback shows that the rider, who has his arms folded, must be in balance. This balance is maintained to a large extent by grip, but no amount of grip would prevent a fall if the rider had no sense of balance. Similarly, however keen the rider's sense of balance, without grip he could not stop on, which also shows that balance and grip are interdependent and essential. Anyone who has had the misfortune to damage a riding muscle soon realises the importance of grip. They quickly find balance alone is quite insufficient.

But the positions in the photographs are chiefly the result of balance, and must therefore be correct according to the pace the horse is going.

A plain fence has been used, 4 ft. 9 ins. high, and 4 ft. broad. The horse's spread measured fifteen feet, or sufficient to carry him over most obstacles in the hunting



PLATE 2.

CORRECT BODY-POSITION AS HORSE RISES TO FENCE
(Note rider more forward than at any other period of the jump.)

field. Extreme cases, such as drop fences will be discussed later.

In Plate II the horse is seen rising at his fence, that is to say, his forehand is above the top of the fence whilst his hind feet have only just left the ground. Now to keep his balance on a pole or a rocking horse, both stationary objects, that might be tilted up, the man would obviously have to lean forward to remain perpendicular. The horseman must therefore do the same thing. But in addition to raising his forehand, a real horse taking an average fence, *springs out*, that is to say very suddenly increases his pace.

It is to cope with this sudden movement that the man in the picture bends forward well in front of the perpendicular and remains slightly in front of it all the way through the leap. Were it not for this he would be exactly perpendicular to the ground in all three pictures. That is to say, he would be apparently leaning forward on the ascent, upright at the top of the jump and *apparently* backwards on the descent. The slower, therefore, the horse approaches the fence the bigger the spring he will have to make to carry him over, and the more sudden the increase of pace which the rider will have to allow for by more pronounced body movement. In other words, the harder it will be to *get with* the horse.

A horse galloping really fast takes small fences almost in his stride and the rider needs to make hardly any allowances for it. This is most noticeable in a hurdle

race. Here the horse is already going so fast that there is less of the sudden increase of pace to get with and therefore less need for body movement.

At this point the inevitable question of what to do at a drop fence crops up. As a rule this point is left unanswered or drowned in a blur of discussion. The Forward Seaters feel they must stick to their forward principles, and the backward seaters tell with glee how their young son fell off at a drop fence his first day out hunting, back from a military riding school.

Plate V answers the question. The rider is not trying to lean back, he is merely keeping his body *in balance*.

He is apparently leaning back because the horse comes to the ground far more perpendicularly than over an ordinary fence. Coming down in this perpendicular way means much more of a jar for the rider to meet than at an ordinary fence, as it means that the horse almost stops for an instant and collects himself before galloping off just as a man would do jumping from a height. This jar is taken up by the rider by suppling and giving at the hips and spine or in other words "crouching."

In opposition to this it has been stated that a horseman should take the shock of a drop-fence in the stirrups whilst resisting at the knees. This argument is supported by reference to the gymnast who sinks momentarily to a squatting position when landing from a height.



PLATE 3

CORRECT BODY-POSITION AT THE TOP OF THE FENCE

This theory, maintaining as it does that all balance comes from the stirrups and knees, strikes at the whole foundation of modern riding, which is that *balance comes from the seat* with the stirrups as an assistance only.

It is, of course, possible for a horseman to poise his body and rely entirely on his stirrups for balance. But a few examples will show that he is then completely at the mercy of his horse, instead of its master, an unpleasant reflection for those who do not happen to own and ride anything but perfect horses.

Anyone who rides and schools young horses, and knows the sudden way they stop when simply going along on the flat, also knows the necessity for sitting down, *balancing from the seat*, and using the legs chiefly for pushing the horse on. The same thing happens when riding a refuser or a young horse over a fence. No one standing in his stirrups and balancing on them can possibly use his legs with sufficient strength to meet the needs of ordinary horsemanship. Balance comes from the part that supports the body. On foot from the feet, in the saddle from the seat. Any other contention is purely theoretical. If a strong seat is to be maintained, the balance of the body should be altered by moving only the body from the hips and giving and suppling at the spine.

There are certain occasions, flat race riding is one of them, when almost the whole weight is carried by the

stirrups. But these are exceptional cases, when the body is kept forward for purposes of speed and hardly in the realm of everyday horsemanship.

The foundation of riding is a good, strong seat. Until that is acquired the rider is helpless.



PLATE 4

CORRECT BODY POSITION JUST BEFORE LANDING.

CHAPTER VI

PASSIVE JUMPING

IT is now time to return to the beginner at his first jump. Though this may bore us it is probably quite exciting to him. I personally will always remember my first attempt at jumping and mention it only because it is probably painfully similar to those of many other people.

The fence itself was only a small affair of hurdles and furze, not more than 3 ft. 6 ins. high. The mare was an ideal sort for a boy, a strong, intelligent-looking cob as active as she was sensible and well mannered. She seemed as impatient to begin as I. In fact, everything appeared to be "set fair" for a good morning. The groom's instructions were brief but accurate as far as they went. "Sit tight," he said, "and give 'er 'er head." There didn't really seem much more to say about a silly little fence of that sort. So off I went. Being summer, the mare had not been over a fence for some months, so no doubt was as determined as her rider to put up a good show.

I have only a vague impression of what followed. The mare seemed to take off yards before the fence and put in a "lep" that would have cleared two similar obstacles one on top of the other. . . . When I came to myself she was galloping round and round the field, kicking, snorting, treading on the reins and generally behaving as though she had not been out of the stable for a week. However, we caught her and I tried again; several times, in fact, before I finally succeeded in landing over the fence still on her back. Delighted, but somewhat puzzled, I decided to go while the going was good and try again next day.

Another painful surprise. In spite of yesterday's triumph and plenty of advice from the groom (who did not, however, volunteer any practical demonstration), I was unable to stop on for more than two jumps. How I managed these I had no idea. It seemed to be a matter of luck. A little later I went to a military riding school, complete with a ferocious riding master and instructors. As these had mostly forgotten how they had ever learnt to ride themselves, they confined their instruction to interminable trotting and an occasional jump without stirrups, frequent exhortations to "stick it," and plenty of personal humour, and sarcasm to relieve the monotony. Under these conditions it is not surprising that progress was not very great.

Modern methods of instruction are very different. To begin with, it is recognised that, though some people are more apt than others, everyone has to be taught, and well



PLATE 5

SEAT OVER A DROP FENCE

Note position of rider's body, and low position of the hand

taught, if they want to turn into good horsemen. Experience teaches, but takes a long while about it, and even then often leaves a lot to be desired.

Secondly, riding must be taught on a system, starting with small beginnings but leading to big things. If this idea is properly carried out the rider will never be able to lose his nerve as he will never be asked to do anything beyond him. This is particularly true of jumping, where, if not fully prepared for the next step the beginner either falls off or loses his position. The net result will be loss of confidence, loss of nerve, and eventually, a thorough distaste for riding.

Suitable horses must be used according to the age, height or weight of the rider, the quietest horses gradually giving place to more lively ones later on. Horses, like riders, vary enormously. Animals that look perfectly all right from the ground often have a most peculiar action or style of jumping which can only be realised when mounted. If a beginner starts on one of these he will probably imagine all horses to be equally awkward and become extremely disillusioned at the outset.

Anyone starting to jump and allowed to hold his reins in the ordinary way is certain to job his horse on the mouth hundreds of times and frequently interfere and upset him without knowing why. Needless to say, this probably not only ruins the horse, turning him into a confirmed refuser, but muddles the rider as well.

He must, therefore, be taught to jump without reins. For this work a school or *manège* is the best place; or even the open will do, provided the horse is sufficiently quiet and wings are placed to prevent him running out.

This is what is known as Passive Jumping. It is called Passive because the rider only needs to use the minimum control. The horse does the rest. All the rider has to do is to concentrate entirely on his seat and position over the fence. He need not worry whether his horse will run out, refuse, play up, take off in the right place or present any of the thousand and one difficulties that usually beset the budding horseman.

In order to give the rider complete confidence the horse should be provided with a *Neck strap* (a stirrup leather buckled round the neck). He can hold on to this when starting at a fresh fence, or whenever he feels in difficulties. Having negotiated this fence on the neck strap once or twice he can then attempt the same thing with his arms folded. This done, the stirrups can be quitted and crossed, and the fence again jumped holding on to the neck strap and later with folded arms.

This sounds quite difficult, but if started over a pole on the ground is not very alarming. Frequent rests are necessary; and no attempt should be made to get on with the next step till the present one has been done perfectly or as near to perfection as possible.

The pole can be raised a few inches every day, or kept



PLATE 6

PASSIVE JUMPING, ARMS FOLDED

at the same height for weeks at a time according to the state of the beginner. Eventually this will give way to a small brush fence, the same methods of jumping being always adhered to. Two fences can then be put down in the form of an in-and-out, then three, four and finally a closed-in lane of fences. This stage may take months to reach, but provided the above system is continued, i.e. neck strap and stirrups, arms folded with stirrups, neck strap without stirrups, arms folded without stirrups, real progress will be certain.

Though plenty of jumping without stirrups must be done, an equal amount of work with them is necessary. If taught to jump entirely without stirrups the beginner is apt to neglect them. This means that he will let them jangle about on his feet, or slip off at the very moment when they are most needed. The stirrups are there for use and assistance, and must never be neglected.

The fences at this stage should not be high, but if placed at different distances and made in different ways (plain brush fences, ditches, rails, etc.) the horse jumps in a slightly different way each time, giving the rider fresh problems of balance to solve. Different horses can be tried for the same reason.

Everyone, of course, is not able to learn riding in this way. If they did, there would be fewer refusers, fewer horses unable to jump in cold blood, and fewer people whose nerve "is not what it was." But something of this

kind can always be done, and given a certain amount of aptitude, keenness, and good teaching the results are astonishing.

At the end of sixty lessons the beginner should have acquired:

1. A firm seat.
2. Balance.
3. Experience of horses' movements on different occasions.
4. Suppleness.
5. Complete confidence.

He is then in a position to become a high-class horseman, and capable of applying the principles of horsemanship dealt with in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VII

HORSES AND HORSEMANSHIP

THE custom of giving beginners bad or carelessly-selected horses is very harmful. A novice is given a bad horse for fear he should ruin a good one. How many people think of the other side of the question? Will a bad horse ruin a beginner? If so, it will be a much more expensive arrangement in the long run; as one pair of hands can spoil a large number of horses? Who does not remember the horses they started to ride on? The hard mouths; insensitive flanks; long jig-jogging walks; the pelting, pulling, bumpy paces; the horrid sticky jumpers; and finally, the awful conviction that once into a gallop there would be no hope of stopping.

No one, of course, does remember these animals. If they did, they would never be so heartless as to condemn their nearest and dearest to ride them. Nor would they ever make that exasperating remark, "If you don't pull at him, he won't pull at you. Don't pull, ease and feel."

Rough horses are definitely bad for a beginner. They impose a great strain, and induce him to adopt all sorts of queer positions to meet it. These may easily become permanent habits. Moreover, if riding is too difficult at the start, he is very likely to lose confidence and this is the worst thing that could happen to anyone who aspires to be a horseman. Not only will he never *look* right; but hesitation, even for a fraction of a second at a critical moment, is communicated like lightning to the horse and spells disaster. How different the attitude in the saddle of the man accustomed to good horses from that of his less fortunate fellows. The former seems to have an easy look, correct in every detail, without appearing to strain after effect. The latter, on the contrary, generally has an uneasy stiff appearance, as though a bomb might burst under the saddle at any moment.

Apart from being bad for nerve, it is hard to see how a beginner can learn horsemanship from anything but a good horse. No one can learn music from an instrument that won't play. Similarly, the principles of horsemanship can only be illustrated perfectly on a perfect horse. Fillis states this clearly in *Breaking and Riding*. His practice was to train and demonstrate on nothing but thoroughbreds, and carefully selected ones at that.

However, as most people intend their horsemanship to be of an entirely practical nature, that is to say, they do not wish to take up Haute Ecole, they need not limit them-

selves to thoroughbreds. It is important, however, for a beginner to ride a really nice horse early in his career. He thus gets some standard for the future, and speedily realises what splendid fun riding can be. He will also learn the true effect of hands and legs on a horse; and then realise that if anything goes wrong it is entirely his own fault.

If a beginner is given a well-trained horse on which to commence the Active Stage he cannot possibly spoil it; that is provided he is taught on the right lines, and has put in the necessary ground work at the Passive Stage. A snaffle may be used instead of a bit until the function of the latter is thoroughly understood. No one is so clumsy or insensitive as to job a horse on the mouth or use needless force once he knows better. People only do these things from ignorance, or inability to control their own actions. When they have acquired good seats as Passive riders, and the independent use of their limbs, only their ignorance remains to be dealt with.

There are plenty of suitable horses for people at this stage of riding. Any well-schooled animal, such as cast Army horses or polo ponies that have become too old and slow for the game would be excellent. In addition to learning horsemanship on this sort of animal, the beginner gets a glimpse of the glorious opportunities of riding.

Horsemanship will then appear a possibility and he will soon be keen to try other and more difficult horses. This is exactly what is wanted, because later in actual practice

he will find that in order to obtain some dominant and important characteristic in his horses, such as speed or jumping power, he may have to sacrifice manners and absolute obedience to hand or leg.

For the practical horseman the ability to ride difficult horses then becomes a necessity. This is just as much of a science as any other part of riding, and does not consist in simply being rough and ready. It actually requires a great deal of horsemanship to ride bad horses, because, in addition to getting the best out of them, an effort must be made to improve them at the same time. Eventually this becomes almost automatic. A good horseman, for instance, would not dream of letting a horse refuse, or shy without doing his best to cure its faults, if possible, permanently. Horses, therefore, reflect the horsemanship of their masters. Some go easily enough for their owners yet with other people appear almost unmanageable. Others get fussy, others again become dull and sluggish. Some have faults which can be improved in time, others are best left alone. To deal successfully with all types of horses requires experience and a high standard of horsemanship, neither of which can be expected from a beginner.

CHAPTER VIII

ACTIVE RIDING. BALANCE, COLLECTION AND CONTROL

THE beginner is now supposed to have finished the Passive Stage and ready to commence Active Riding. Actually there is, of course, no sharp dividing line between the two stages. The beginner can prepare for the Active Stage a long while previously by trying simple movements; but whereas his chief endeavour before was to acquire a firm seat and independent use of the limbs, henceforth it will be to learn how to use these powers to the best advantage, in other words, to learn horsemanship. It is therefore necessary to define horsemanship.

Horsemanship is primarily a question of control or rather command over the powers of the horse. It may be to make him gallop extended; it may be to make him walk collectedly. It may be to make him stop, turn, jump, do anything in fact, in obedience to the rider's will. All this is part of horsemanship. But only part of it, as before the rider can be considered a good horseman he must do all these things in such a way as to *improve* the horse; or at

least make certain of not spoiling him if he is perfect already. In addition to this he must look right.

There is an indescribable appearance of ease about good horsemen that no amount of teaching can ever produce. It is the outcome of absolute confidence and the delight of being in the saddle. This feeling of complete confidence can only come from the rider having tested his own powers on scores of occasions, and knowing that he has full control of the situation at *all paces*. For the purposes of explanation the following chapters deal chiefly with control at the slower paces, but the beginner must get equally good at fast work to succeed. A suitable programme of a course of training on these lines is given at the end of the book. In the meanwhile a consideration of Balance and Collection, two things which have the greatest bearing on the subject, is recommended.

Balance

Balance is one of the most important factors in the activities of human beings or animals. Bad footwork, which really means bad balance, as everyone knows, is the worst thing for nearly all games. Though improvement is often possible, the man naturally clever with his feet starts with the greatest advantage. He is the man with natural balance.

Balance in horses means their ability to control their

own actions, their general activity. It is mostly natural, but can be greatly improved. Horses vary enormously in natural balance. The Arab is probably the best balanced horse in the world; with the result that he can be trained in far less time than any other. The thoroughbred is usually better balanced than other horses, possibly owing to his kinship with the Arab. Non-thoroughbred horses differ in an amazing degree; but few exist which have not some defect due directly or indirectly to balance. This horse pokes his nose. That one is overbent. Another gets his head down and so on. Very few are perfect rides. Bad training, of course, is responsible in many cases. But why do naturally well-balanced horses not exhibit these characteristics more often? The reason is that owing to their extremely good conformation training comes more easily to them than to other horses. Their temperaments and mouths remain better as they are less pulled about. They are active, so they often take naturally to a movement that another horse finds extremely hard. A badly balanced horse is often forced to do something very difficult for him. This is very likely to sour his temper and develop his defects. In order to compensate himself for lack of balance he will try and protect himself from what he feels is impossible by putting up some defence against the rider, such as not going up to the bit, jibbing, etc. The question of balance can therefore never be overlooked.

A horse's balance is affected by his whole conformation and temperament, but probably more by the setting and size of the head and neck than anything else.

The most practical example of this is the polo pony, that can be collected to canter at the slowest paces or extend himself freely when desired. He will generally be found to carry his head fairly high, lowering it when galloping out and raising it to slow up.

It is impossible, however, to lay down a hard and fast rule on this subject. Some horses may balance themselves best with their heads lower than others, according to the secrets of their conformation. This is for the trainer to find out from the "feel" of the horse. Speaking generally a well-balanced horse in a state of collection should carry his neck at 45° and his head at 60° to the ground. This is a good deal higher than he would carry it in a state of nature.

But the best way to find out if a horse is well balanced is to ride him. After making allowances for hard mouth, excitability or any other defects, he should feel comfortable to ride and easy to control. If he is able to comply easily with the rider's demands he must be well balanced.

Collection

Collection is the art of making a horse prepare himself for some movement. To do this, he must poise and use

all his power of balance. It is, as it were, the cautionary word of command. It is the exploiting of balance. When people refer to "so and so, who balances his horses so beautifully," they generally mean how well he "collects" them. A horse can only be balanced by someone in a long and systematic course of training, not on a single occasion.

To collect a horse, he must be got into such a state, position or frame of mind, that he is prepared to use his full powers instantly on a given signal. The greater his natural balance, the more perfect his training, the easier this will be.

If ridden on a loose rein, that is to say in an uncollected state a horse will naturally look about, lower his head, and generally slop along. Suppose at this moment his rider tried to turn him without collecting him, and simply gave a tug to one rein. What would happen? The horse would swing round anyhow. He might stumble. He might hit himself. He might fight the rider. The whole affair would be an exceedingly clumsy performance. The horse would deteriorate in manners, just as a regiment would in smartness if given a slovenly word of command. The object of collection, therefore, is to obtain control.

A horse can be collected to a certain extent at almost any pace. Even at full gallop there is all the difference between a horse that is held together and one that is not.

The highest state of collection, however, takes place at the slowest paces. The horse should then be ready suddenly to increase his pace and dart forward at full speed although actually being restrained by the hand. In this state he can not only be made to go forward at the least signal, but turn, rein back, passage or briefly use all his powers to the utmost of his ability. Collection is, therefore, controlled and pent-up energy. This energy or impulsion is primarily created by the legs. The horse must, therefore, respond to the most delicate application of both hand and leg. This means that not only must he be well balanced but have a good mouth and plenty of natural impulsion. A horse in an extreme state of collection is made to carry his head high so that his neck is about 45° to the ground and his nose is brought in so that the head is at or about 60° . Moreover, the horse must also Flex or Bridle if the best results are to be obtained, but this subject will be dealt with in another chapter.

How far it is necessary to collect a horse depends on what the rider wishes to do. Haute Ecole movements demand more collection than any other form of riding, but some degree is always essential. It must be understood, however, that collection is only the outcome of training, so before a horse can be collected properly he must have been taught the full meaning of hand and leg. To get good collection a horse must be able to flex. If he does not do this his mouth generally becomes hard and dead

and the muscles of the neck stiff and set against the hand. Force then has to be used instead of suggestion. Hands have practically no meaning. The importance of flexion is therefore very great, and will be dealt with in a later chapter.

CHAPTER IX

HANDS

MOST writers on hands seem to drown their subject in a wave of generalities. A great deal is made of the necessary qualities, Sympathy, Balance, Kindness, Confidence and so on, but little is said about what hands actually do. Some people admit there is no mystery; but few attempt to clear it up. However wise this attitude may be it is not very instructive. It is surely possible to delve more deeply into the subject, and to state more definitely what is wanted.

Before doing so, it is again necessary to emphasise the importance of a firm seat and independent use of the limbs, as mentioned in Chapter IV. One hears so many people say of their young hopeful: "He hasn't done very much riding but he has very good hands." Only modesty prevents them adding that he inherits these, and the nice things that are generally associated with them from their own side of the family. All it really amounts to, however, is that he knows enough not to job a horse on the mouth,

if he can help it! He probably really does possess sufficient nervous sensibility to get good hands in time. In the meanwhile, owing to weakness, there will probably be a dozen occasions in the first ten minutes when he cannot help misusing them.

Without a firm seat, he will ride by balance alone. The moment he loses this, the horse's mouth will be his only support. For instance, the horse may hear something coming up behind and shoot forward. Balance by itself will never suffice. The rider is bound to be jerked back, and saves himself falling off by clutching at the reins, incidentally giving his horse a tremendous jerk on the mouth.

Again, unless the rider has complete and independent use of his legs when mounted, it is difficult to see how he can possibly possess hands at all. Suppose the horse refuses to move; his hands will not even begin to function. Hands and legs are therefore inextricably interdependent. It is impossible to discuss them separately.

What are good hands?

Merely not interfering with a horse is nothing. Indeed, it is hard to say which are the worst, the hands that are too feeble or those that are too rough. It is quite a common sight to see someone give in to his horse and allow him his own way, when he should use both hands and legs in the most decided manner. The man who lets his horse swerve and run out from a fence that he is easily capable

of jumping, or refuse to turn away from other horses, is an instance of this. Though neither of them may seem very terrible, in reality a great deal of harm has been done.

A horse is trained almost entirely through his memory, and the capacity for forming habits. If he is allowed to form bad ones, both his mouth and manners will be affected. He will become more and more difficult to ride, and if unchecked, will finally be labelled "Vicious." He will then either be shot or sold. If bought, the buyer will almost certainly be a man who intends to cure him as quickly as possible and sell him again. In this latter event his re-breaking will probably be as severe as it is clumsy. Feeble hands, therefore, are likely to be the cause of great trouble for horse as well as man.

Rough hands, as everybody knows, not only deaden the mouth of a keen horse and turn him into a confirmed puller, but can be positively dangerous on a light-mouthed one, through making him rear up and come over backwards. Few sensible people, however, are intentionally rough with a horse. If they are, they should never be allowed near one. Apart from the question of cruelty, no practical good ever comes from roughness or loss of temper. A horse cannot reason. It is, therefore, worse than useless to expect him to understand the cause for rough treatment. He merely comes to associate a man with a series of unpleasant events, and very naturally gets permanently upset.

But some people are so naturally clumsy and insensitive with their hands that they do not realise when they are using unnecessary force. In this case nothing can be done. These are the only people of whom it can truly be said, they are "born" without hands.

Good hands are those that *know* when to give and when to take. Each horse has to be ridden in a slightly different way. It is no use simply "Easing and Feeling" automatically, regardless of what horse is being ridden. Knowledge, and experience, which is simply knowledge acquired from practice, are therefore more important for the average man than anything else. With this must be added determination. It is no use knowing that a horse must be turned away from others if the rider has not sufficient determination to carry it through, and put up with the ensuing fuss. Sympathy, at this moment, would be entirely misplaced. It is a quality that should govern the entire conduct of the rider, and ought not to be brought out on any particular occasion. Until the rider not only knows, but knows that he knows how to handle each different horse, he is bound to lack confidence. This is quickly communicated to the horse, who will play up accordingly, and straightway contradict his master's claim to hands.

To have Good Hands therefore it is necessary to know all about a normal horse's mouth and manners. This

entails a knowledge of horse training. The final test of good hands or good horsemanship does not lie in riding a well-trained horse. After all, horses are intended to be ridden, and a well-schooled horse is one that is easy for anyone to ride. The kind of mouth and manners the trainer can produce from the raw article is a much better indication of good hands than anything else. To ride a difficult horse, which usually means a half-educated one, is the next hardest thing to do.

To ride a quiet, well-trained horse is easy enough. Even a novice can get along quite well on a really good horse up to a point. It is after that point, when a horse begins to get a little bit bored, or with a horse that is difficult from the very start, that hands show up. Hands mean a great deal more than not jobbing a horse on the mouth. Good hands are the ability to control a horse in the neatest and most effective way, and improve him at the same time; or if he is so good already that this is impossible, at least not to spoil him. This is rather an important point. Many people can control a horse in their own peculiar way, but in so doing, they often make him difficult and sometimes impossible for others to ride.

To study the question of hands, it is necessary to understand fully what powers or "Aids," as they are called, the rider has at his disposal. These powers are classified as Artificial and Natural Aids.

The Artificial Aids are Martingales, Dumb-jockeys, Overhead checks or any similar appliances which of themselves assist the horseman.

The Natural Aids are:

1. The Legs, reinforced by the Spurs and Whip.
2. The Hands.
3. The Weight.
4. The Voice.

The Legs. The legs must invariably be used in conjunction with the hands. As explained previously, a horse must be collected before commencing any movement. The legs must again be used to help the hands carry out the movement. Thus, to turn a horse to the right: the right rein turns the horse's head, the left leg is used to prevent his quarters flying out to the left, and both legs are used to keep him up to the bit. It will be noticed that even in this simple movement both Hands and Legs are used at the same time for different purposes. The rider has a third power at his disposal; this is his own weight. He uses this in all movements to assist him, but like the Hands and Legs, in the neatest and quietest way possible.

The smooth application and collaboration of these three powers, i.e. The Hands, Legs and Weight is sometimes called the Harmony of the Aids. It will be noticed in

Appendix I that all movements involve action of the Legs and Hands and Weight.

The Legs either Act or Yield, that is to say, they must never be just idle. They are definitely concerned in everything that is going on. If they Yield or do nothing, as at *moments* during the Rein Back, it is because the rider wants them to do nothing for an instant only. The legs have an enormous range of power, varying from the slightest squeeze of the knees to the full effect of the application of the lower leg, if necessary assisted by the spur and reinforced by the stick.

The Hands. The Hands act similarly to the Legs, i.e. they either Act or Yield. They Act when they alter the horse's movements, as in Turning him. They Yield when they purposely give free play to his head, as in Jumping. They, too, have the widest range of power, varying from the lightest touch of the fingers to the full strength of the arms, acting on—

- (1) The Bridoon.
- (2) The Bit.

The Bit acts with the added force of leverage from the curb on the Sensitive Bars of a horse's mouth. The Bars are easily deadened, so the bit should never be used severely. If the horse will not obey the bit it is no use pulling harder. Either the Bit should be discarded or the horse should be re-trained.

The Bridoon or snaffle acts on the corners of the lips which are not so sensitive as the Bars. In addition to holding him the action of the Snaffle tends to raise the horse's head, and this also has the effect of stopping him.

The rider can therefore select from a wide range of powers. It remains to be seen how best to employ them. Horse training is not the object of this book, but it must be stated briefly that it is carried out chiefly on the system of the Formation of Good Habits and subsequent Reward. Thus it can easily be seen that if the horse is allowed to go along with a dead pull on his mouth he eventually forms the habit of disregarding the Bit. This finally becomes incurable owing to the deadening of the nerves. Similarly, if a horse is allowed to disregard a pressure of the legs he will continue to do so until his flanks become completely insensitive.

The horse, therefore, must be taught the different notes of the scale by the man who schools him, and kept at that pitch by Good Hands. Having played his part satisfactorily, he must be rewarded. Not some time afterwards with a piece of sugar, as he would be quite unable to associate the two ideas, but by the instantaneous cessation of the rider's demands. It is this which constitutes the "Ease" in the well-known saying "Ease and Feel," and it must never be done until obedience has been obtained. Thus, a man wishes to slow his horse gently from a gallop to a walk. He feels both reins, the bit between the fingers

and thumb, and the bridoon more strongly with the hand. Partial obedience is obtained, the horse begins to slow up. Immediate reward by cessation of the pull for an instant! Another feel, with even less force from the hand. After a few movements of this sort, the hands being used more and more delicately, the horse will probably slow up to a walk. Again, immediate reward by riding along for some strides on a loose rein. If the horse has to be pulled up more suddenly, these movements must be delivered more quickly, but the same principle applies which is *Reward your horse by giving to him the moment he gives to you.*

The legs are used in the same way. That is to say, they start with a slight pressure, and if obedience is not obtained, stronger measures are resorted to.

The action of the hands and legs, or the Aids, is the language in which the rider speaks to his horse. If no notice is taken, the question is put, as it were, in a louder tone of voice, which returns to normal again on receiving the answer. In order not to upset the horse, the least force necessary to obtain obedience must always be used. This is why a good rider on a well trained horse hardly appears to be doing anything.

As regards length of rein, it will be found that the best horseman invariably rides with the reins as long as possible compatible with control. Why this is so it is hard to say. Possibly because the hands are held lower in relation to the horse's mouth than when the reins are held

short. The hands also should be placed as low as possible without appearing set or fixed, over the withers with the wrists slightly rounded. If there is occasion to raise them they should again return to this position, which must be regarded as the normal.

To sum up, then, Good Hands are the outcome of:

- (1) A Good Seat.
- (2) Knowledge and Experience.
- (3) Determination.
- (4) Sensitiveness, and
- (5) Neatness of Style.

CHAPTER X

ADVANCED JUMPING

THE earlier chapter on jumping was written simply to try and show the correct seat over a fence and the best way to obtain it. The question of horsemanship did not arise. The rider was entirely *passive*, merely learning to *sit on* and to use the different parts of his body independently. If this has been thoroughly assimilated, together with the rudiments of how to control the horse, he should now be ready to learn how to *make* it jump, instead of merely following its movements over easy fences. This will be known henceforth in this book as Active Jumping, as the rider is Active and responsible for what happens. For example, there is all the difference in riding over a fence with wings and one without. In the first case, the horse is almost certain to jump; in the second, only horsemanship will prevent him running out. Active Jumping is part of Active Riding generally and comes into the same lesson. Though progress will be extraordinarily quick if the elementary work has been properly done, the beginner



PLATE 7

ACTIVE JUMPING

(Note 1, Position of rider's head, 2, Suppleness of body, 3, Hands allowing sufficient rein, 4, Seat well down in saddle, 5, Use of lower leg)

must again perfect himself over small fences before going on to big ones.

Some of the old ideas and mottoes about jumping were rather misleading. They implied that a fence was a big affair and something to be rather frightened of. Why? If both horse and rider know what to do there is no reason to be afraid. The whole thing should go with the utmost smoothness. Jumping, like almost everything else, is easy enough once it is understood. It is as a rule only ignorance that makes it appear rather terrifying to the beginner.

That horses like jumping if they have been ridden well previously is clearly seen by the way many of them cock their ears and make for a jump the moment they see it. These are, however, the exception rather than the rule. This is partly owing to the lack of good horsemen, and partly because of a very natural tendency in most horses to take the shortest cut to everything unless kept up to the mark. Thus, horses will generally try and run past a fence without wings, swerve from a thick part of a fence to a gap, and brush through one rather than clear it by inches, or even refuse altogether. All this is done to save themselves effort, and it is the task of horsemanship to make them carry out the full demands of the rider. Care must, of course, be taken to see that the horse is in a thoroughly fit state. Many horses refuse entirely from the pain they know they will receive through landing on groggy legs. The rider must also be certain that the

jump is well within the horse's power. Apart from these considerations, he must not only exact implicit obedience on this one occasion but also try and get the horse into the *habit* of always doing what is wanted.

Active Jumping, therefore, demands a great deal of horsemanship, for the moment the horse sees the fence his attention is attracted towards it and away from the rider. Unless his mind is made up for him he will have decided long before he has reached it exactly what he is going to do—whether to rush, refuse, swerve, brush through or jump it properly. All this is determined partly by habit and partly by the man on his back. The more unruly the habits he has been allowed to get into the more need will there be for good horsemanship.

A big show-jumping competition always provides a good object lesson in jumping. Many people object to show-jumping as “trick riding,” but none the less it demands horsemanship of a high order. In no other branch of riding is jumping the chief consideration. In steeple-chasing the main object is to win the race. In hunting as long as the obstacle is cleared that is all that is wanted. In show-jumping accuracy is essential, and any mistakes bring disaster. Therefore to learn about jumping pure and simple, and particularly the different ways of presenting horses it is always interesting.

The first thing to decide when coming to a fence is what part to jump. The next is the question of pace.



PLATE 8

HORSES LIKE JUMPING
(Note good position of hands)

Although it may not seem to matter much whether a natural fence is jumped a foot or two to the right or left, in practice it often does. If the hardest and highest place is selected the horse may easily swerve and jump through a weak spot. This is disobedience of orders and ought to be corrected. It is not always possible to do this at the time (when hunting, for instance), but can be easily cured with a little re-schooling. Again, some horses develop the habit of turning as they jump and taking the fence aslant. This, again, is a fault which may become very exaggerated if not checked at once. It is best, therefore, to try not to give the horse a chance to do the wrong thing unless he can be corrected *at the time*.

As regards pace, there are two things to be considered. Firstly, the size and construction of the fence; and secondly, the pace at which the horse likes jumping. Circumstances do not always permit the inclinations of either horse or rider to be considered. There is no time to slow up in a point-to-point. . . . But racing is a thing apart and, speaking generally, a wide fence like a brook should be taken a good deal faster than a high one like a gate. But even here it is impossible to lay down a hard and fast rule. Many people gallop as hard as they can at a wide place only to push their horse off his stride and make him jump badly. Perhaps a well-collected approach would have done better. On the other hand, most horses have a particular pace at which they find jumping easiest. This

differs with every horse and can only be discovered from experience. It must, however, always be taken into account whenever a special effort is required.

The outcome of all these considerations is called "Presenting" a horse at a fence, and it is a far more difficult thing to do well than the actual jump itself. It comes into all branches of riding. Every horseman knows what it is to come "wrong" at a fence. Some horses are naturally such good jumpers that they put themselves right without any help from their rider. Others are perfectly safe if properly ridden and put right. The question of collection and control therefore immediately crops up. To put a horse right he must, obviously, be under complete control and well collected. The better balanced the horse he is the less help he requires from the rider.

Some people always try and make horses take off from a particular spot. This is very fine horsemanship, but hardly necessary for the ordinary man across country. With a well-schooled horse it is nearly always sufficient to slow up and collect him a few strides before the fence. Then, with a strong pressure of the legs, bring him up to the fence at an even stride and well in hand. A quick indication, kick of "office," whatever it may be called, just before the fence will make up the horse's mind to jump, and horse and rider will go over as one. The rider's hands should give to the movements of the horse's head once



PLATE 9

A BROAD FENCE

(Note seat, and contact with mouth, maintained)

he has left the ground without losing contact with his mouth. This will be quite easy if he is in the correct position of balance.

There is a great deal of theory and speculation among experts as to the best way to put a horse "right" at a fence. This is rather puzzling, not only to novices, but also to many people who have been over a great number of fences without even being conscious of having done anything remarkable with their hands or legs. There is no doubt that the ordinary person need never bother about putting a horse right or "timing" him at fences across country. The simple aids mentioned above are quite sufficient. There is no need to complicate matters. Provided a man is consistent in his style of jumping, does the same things with his legs, and keeps the same feeling on the reins at every fence the ordinary horse will always jump well. There need never be any question of putting him "right" or coming "wrong." The experienced horse dislikes a fall as much as his master, and can always find a way out of any of the ordinary difficulties of the hunting field if he wants to.

But for the man who wishes to jump difficult fences, or he who is unfortunate enough to find himself on a bad sprawling jumper, it is obvious that everything must be done to make a certainty of not only clearing fences, but clearing them perfectly. This means that not only must the horse jump his best, but he must take off in exactly

the right place each time. This, the horse, if left entirely to himself might or might not do. Presuming he would not, there are different theories current as to how it should best be done, which are dealt with separately in the following paragraphs.

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Bringing a horse right at a fence. (See Plate XI, Diagram 1.)

If R is the correct place to take off for the fence F, it is obvious from the above diagram that a horse approaching it with equal strides will either arrive at R or somewhere between R and F, say W, in other words too close to the fence.

There are two distinct methods of getting the horse to jump from R. Both are equally successful, though differing very much from each other in practice. One is actually to ride and control the horse's strides so that he arrives at point R for certain. The other is to train the horse to do this himself with the least possible help from his rider.

The first system is known as "Timing," as the rider actually times or places the horse to arrive right. The second is sometimes known as the "Foreign Style," as that is the method adopted by most foreigners when jumping.

These two need some explanation.



PLATE 10

A WATER JUMP

(Note body forward but rider well down in saddle)

1st Method—Timing.

It has been found from experience that the best place for a horse to take off for a high fence is the same distance away from the fence as its actual height. Thus, if a fence is five feet high a horse should take off five feet away from it. The higher the fence the greater need for accuracy in taking off. There are many ways of *making* a horse take off from the right place but probably the best is illustrated in No. 2 Diagram.

Here the rider brings his horse up to point S at a very slow and extremely collected canter. Then, with vigorous use of the legs, he makes the horse extend himself and take 1, 2 or 3 strides so that at the last stride the horse's forefeet (and consequently his hind feet later) arrive at point R. Here with the usual indication or "office" the horse should put in a good leap and clear the fence.

The number of long strides before taking off is not necessarily restricted to three. The horse can be made to jump after one if brought up close enough, but it is extremely difficult for him to extend himself sufficiently to jump well after having been collected such a short time before. Again, more than three long strides can be taken between S and R, but this increases the difficulty of correct judgment for the rider, the whole art being to know exactly, before pushing the horse on, how many strides to take from S to arrive exactly at R.

This is the most usual method of timing, and the easiest to follow from the spectators' point of view. It is well illustrated at Olympia by British horsemen. To get good results not only must the horse be very highly schooled and extremely responsive to hand and leg, but also possess very even, smooth paces. It is very little use trying to time a horse that is excitable, or apt to take quick unforeseen strides at odd moments. Something is sure to happen to upset the calculations.

Again, timing is very difficult, if not impossible on a badly balanced horse. Such an animal never allows his rider to get sufficient collection in the first place to place him right, and is just as likely to arrive wrong as right.

An extraordinarily high standard, therefore, is necessary on the part of both horse and rider to get a really smooth first-class performance. A great many people spoil their appearance by wriggling and jerking about in the saddle in their anxiety to bring their horses right. Needless to say, this usually fails in its object and looks most unsightly. One of the chief features in good horsemanship is the art of sitting still. However, with a really good horse and rider the results are not only very good but extremely consistent, though the combination is a hard one to find.

Other methods of timing are generally achieved by shortening, instead of lengthening, the horse's stride somewhere in front of a jump. As he comes up to the fence the rider can see if he is coming right or not. If right,

DIAGRAM 1

RIGHT (R) - and WRONG (W)

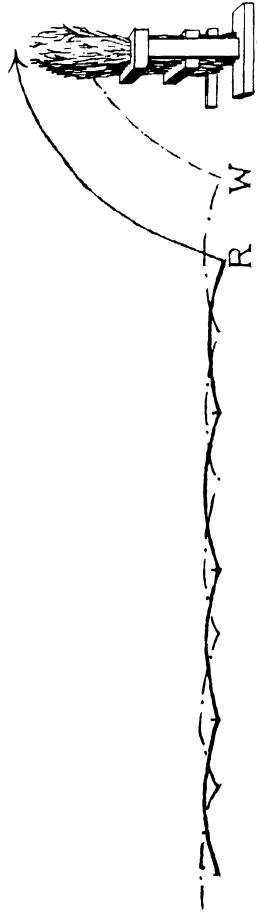
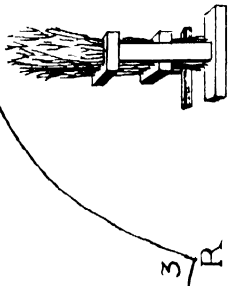


DIAGRAM 2

Extreme Collection
S
1 2 3
"Lengthening the Stride"



Stride Shortened

DIAGRAM 3

SHORTENING THE STRIDE



he naturally leaves the horse alone and takes the fence in the ordinary way. If wrong, by shortening or lengthening one or two strides at the right time, he can make fairly certain of arriving right. (See Plate XI, Diagram 3.)

The disadvantage of this is the obvious interference with the horse. Just at the moment that he should be concentrating on putting in a good "leap" he gets a pull on the mouth, or a kick in the flanks, probably raises his head and takes his eye off the fence. This, however, is the usual way to put a horse right when going really fast, and there is no time to pull right up and collect him.

2nd Method—The Foreign Style.

Foreign officers when show-jumping do not all ride in exactly the same way, but most appear to adopt the same principle, that is—leave it to the horse. This is perhaps illustrated best by Lieut. Bizard, a brilliant French Army horseman, who once said, "I should like to put up on the walls of every Riding School: *Remember, it is the horse that jumps, not you.*"

In this method the man puts all the responsibility of coming right at the fence on the horse. This does not mean he brings him up anyhow. On the contrary, he gives him every chance to do his best by choosing the most suitable pace on the approach. But he does leave entirely to the horse where he is going to put his feet during

the last few strides, and let him make the actual jump without interference. This is often called the Passive Style, and sounds as if the horseman sat like a lump and did nothing. In reality it is not passive at all. The horseman has had a great deal of training to do beforehand in order to get his horse certain of not making a mistake. He has, moreover, to assist him greatly by judging the right pace to take him up to the fence, and by not interfering with either legs, hands or weight he is certainly helping rather than hindering him. With a willing horse it is surely better to do this than to interfere.

Different people develop their own particular methods, but all who jump in this way appear far more quiet in the saddle and their horses as a rule far less fussy. It has, moreover, the advantage of developing the intelligence of the horse and teaching him to get out of a difficulty on his own. To ride a horse that has been accustomed to being accurately "timed" at all fences by a brilliant horseman is surely rather an ordeal for most people, who would probably much prefer the horse to do most of the work himself.



PLATE 12

THE FOREIGN STYLE
(Note loose reins and seat out of the saddle.)

CHAPTER XI

ADVANCED HORSEMANSHIP

IN spite of the well-known advantages of training in the riding school or *manège* for both hunters and polo ponies, there are still a number of people who regard school work as unnatural and unnecessary. Provided a horse can gallop and jump, pull up in a reasonable time, stand still to be mounted or at opening a gate, that is all they want. "None of your blasted Haute Ecole," they say or would like to say. "I always hack my young horses about the lanes in the summer and show them hounds in the autumn. That's the way to train hunters." Although these views seem rather sweeping, there is enough in them to justify investigation, particularly as so many horses *are* trained in this way.

The fact is that *bad* training in the riding school is worse than none at all. There is no merit in the performance of a certain number of school movements. To make a horse passage, rein back, turn on the haunches, etc., does him no good unless the rider keeps in view the object of

what he is doing. This is to produce a good horse for practical purposes, not one only good inside a school. To put a horse through a stereotyped school curriculum without due regard to conformation or temperament is asking for trouble. Hard mouths and sulky, irritable tempers will be the almost certain result. Nature must be taken into account. To demand good head carriage and flexion, for instance, from a horse physically incapable of it frequently goes a long way towards producing the "roarer" or "whistler." It is often necessary, therefore, to overlook faults in one horse that would not be tolerated in another. The object of this book, however, is to teach practical horsemanship, not to discuss horse-training, and there is no doubt that in spite of the disadvantages and prejudices just mentioned a knowledge of advanced school work is essential for the would-be horseman. Though there may not be much practical use for many of the movements themselves, they teach people to appreciate and get the best out of their horses, and also to learn to train young ones. They demonstrate the necessity for hands better, perhaps, than any other part of horsemanship, and so cannot be excluded from the programme of any keen beginner.

When a young horse begins his training he is, as a rule, simply ridden about on a snaffle. He is taught to disregard strange sights and sounds; to walk, trot and canter with occasional easy turns. This is fairly simple work, which

even a moderate rider with patience and determination can carry out. The rudiments of Advanced Schoolwork are then usually taught while the horse is still on the snaffle. Later, after the horse is bitted up his real training in Advanced Schoolwork begins.

From now on is the critical stage in his career and will demand real horsemanship from the rider. The bit, acting on the sensitive bars of the mouth multiplies the strength of the hand by leverage. If correctly used, it will produce a delicacy of response that cannot be obtained from a snaffle. Badly handled, it can so completely deaden the mouth that the horse comes to disregard it entirely. The same principle applies to the legs. It is the proper combination of hand and leg that produces a really well-trained horse.

It must not be thought that the order in which the following movements are described here has anything to do with the order in which they are carried out in the training. All should be practised, but the state and tendency of each horse regulates which movements to stress. For instance, one horse may learn to Passage much easier than to Rein Back. Plenty of reining back should then be practised until both exercises are done equally well.

All school-work, whether done in a riding school or not, has the very definite effect of quietening a horse and getting it behind the bit. Any tendency in this direction must, therefore, be counteracted by plenty of free forward move-

ment at all paces. Schooling a horse is like sharpening a pencil. All sides must be attended to, and rough edges smoothed off.

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All advanced school movements must be done with the horse in a state of Collection, "up to the bit" and flexing freely.

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Flexion. To produce Direct Flexion a tension should be exerted on the bit rein. The horse should yield only his head and jaw to this pressure in a quick and decided manner. Any other movement, such as reining back or decreasing the pace, must be checked by a combination of hand and leg. The hand must yield the instant flexion is obtained. Whereupon the horse should again take up the bit ready to surrender it again.

Lateral Flexion is obtained in a similar way, only the head is yielded to one side. The former is used to obtain smoothness in decreasing the pace and the latter smoothness in turning. In both it is essential that the position of the neck remains unchanged by any movement of the hand. The whole affair is a delicate one, and a great deal of the finesse of riding is lost if horses do not flex. Many horses have not been taught the habit or have lost it from bad riding. These latter cases are more difficult to teach

than young horses, but if they have good conformation they are generally worth the extra work.

Some horses yield their heads to one side in turning more than the other. This makes them easier to turn to one side than the other and is known as "one-sidedness." The only cure is to passage and turn the horse to the hard side until the resistance is overcome.

The Full Passage. The horse is made to move laterally without gaining ground but keeping parallel to his original direction. This is done (to the left) by feeling the left reins and exerting a pressure with the right leg as required. The horse must cross his feet in front and bend his head slightly to the left from the poll without bending his neck. This movement sounds simple, but is difficult for both horse and rider to do properly.

Horses always have a tendency to "resist" or "evade" their riders. The more difficult the movement they are asked to do the more pronounced these tendencies become. If not checked or overcome at once they will be twice as hard to deal with later. The horse can resist or evade in the Passage in many different ways. For instance he can refuse to go square, i.e. not parallel to his original direction, and lead with either the hindquarters or the forehand. He can get behind the bit and cross his feet behind one another instead of in front. The rider then loses control, as the horse in getting behind the bit

wilfully disregards the legs, and is not in contact with the hands. He must at all costs be collected again and made to accept contact with the bit.

He can also run away from the leg, i.e. passage faster than he is meant to do. On the other hand he can passage a little bit slower than his rider intends. Whilst otherwise correct, most horses will avoid correct lateral Flexion when passaging, and try not to bend their heads the way they are going. This is an extremely important part of the exercise. Why, it is hard to say, except that experience has found the best results are always obtained when it is insisted on.

Many different evasions will occur. It is impossible to describe the best way to deal with each resistance or evasion, but provided the rider *does* overcome them without damaging the general sensitiveness of the horse, he can use his own methods and initiative. The horse should be made to feel like a controlled spring, *ready* to move forward, backward, or laterally, but not attempting to do so until permitted.

The Half Passage. The half passage is done in exactly the same way and for the same reasons as the Full Passage, i.e. to get the horse obedient to the leg. But in this movement the horse is made to gain ground to the front as well as to the flank. It can be done at both the Trot and Canter. This will require still greater control by the rider and more complete obedience from the horse.

Striking off on a named Leg at the Canter. A well-balanced horse when cantering on a circle to the right should lead with his off fore and off hind legs; similarly when circling to the left his near fore and near hind. If he leads with the *near* fore and *near* hind when circling to the *right* he is said to be cantering False, and if with the off fore but *near hind*, Disunited. Needless to say unless a horse canters True and United at all times he is apt to be uncomfortable, clumsy and even dangerous to ride. A perfectly balanced animal, like an Arab, will always canter correctly, and change legs when necessary without any aids, but most horses take a good deal of training to reach this stage. A still higher, though possibly more unpractical stage of training is for the horse to go *False* but *United intentionally* until definitely "changed" by the rider.

To strike a horse off on the near fore the horse's head is turned slightly to the right, the pace slightly increased, and the right leg applied stronger than the left. If the horse will obey the leg as he should, from having been taught the Passage, this will have the effect of slightly over-balancing him to the left. He very naturally puts out the near fore and near hind to save himself. Later he will become so used to the correct aids for the canter that the slightest indication only will be sufficient. To change legs or strike off on the off fore and off hind, the opposite aids should be used.

As in all aids with a young or awkward horse they must be very pronounced, and made in such a way that less effort is required from the rider each succeeding time. This is achieved by following up every disobedience with some slight but immediate punishment from the voice, legs or stick and a sharper application of the aids, and every obedience by a reward in the shape of a rest (allowing the horse a loose rein or to lose collection).

Young horses will often change legs at a gallop on the straight from fatigue and slackness. This is a very annoying habit which must not be tolerated. In addition to the discomfort it imposes on the rider, it materially affects the pace of the horse and shows greenness and bad training.

The Rein Back. In this movement the horse is made to halt, walk backwards a few steps in a collected manner and then move forward at any pace required by the rider. The easiest way to rein *back* is from a walk, moving forward at a walk. The most difficult one from a gallop to a gallop. The horse must always rein back slowly and deliberately.

As in the Passage, various evasions will be met, and must be checked in a similar manner. The horse will probably try and halt uncollectedly with his head out and low and hocks sprawling behind him. This is the reverse of what is wanted, and defeats the object of the exercise. It also gives the rider a very uncomfortable jolt at fast

paces, a sure sign that something is wrong. He may also try to rein back in a zig-zag fashion. This can, however, easily be checked when he has learnt obedience from the leg in the Passage, and eventually the attempt will be given up.

When moving forward after the rein back the horse will probably again be inclined to sprawl either from inability or laziness. If the former, time and education will strengthen him up to the required standard. If the latter, the rider must show plainly he has no intention of being imposed upon. As in the passage, the horse may "run back" out of hand, or refuse to rein back; thereby in the first place showing disobedience to the leg and in the second to the hand, both of which must be checked.

The Turn on the Haunches. In turning to the right on the haunches the horse's head is first bent and turned to the right with the right rein. Pressure from the left leg will prevent the quarters flying out to the left, and both hands and legs should be used in harmony to prevent the horse either running back or starting forward. If an unschooled horse is forced to turn quickly by a strong horseman he will do what is usually described as a turn on the forehand. This means that whilst the forelegs stay in the same place, the hind legs and body swing round them. The result is not only extremely uncomfortable for the rider but ends in an uncollected sprawl on the part of

the horse. As the horse learns to balance himself better and becomes obedient to the leg, he will turn more and more "on the hocks," that is to say with the body pivoting round the hind legs instead of the front ones. He then finishes the movement collectedly, and is consequently able to start off far more quickly than before. This is an advantage in any horse, but particularly in a polo pony.

The "turn on the hocks or haunches" is taught first at a standstill, working up by stages to a turn at full speed. The horse is *bent* (flexed) and turned to one side or another with the hand whilst the hind feet are kept on the same spot during the turn by the legs. Needless to say, similar resistances to those previously described will be met with and must be overcome. It is easy to feel without looking down whether the movement is being done correctly.

As it is often only possible to ride with the reins held in one hand, horses should also be taught to turn on the application of the reins against the neck. Neck reining, as this is called, is useful for all horses, but particularly polo ponies, ridden as they are with the reins in one hand.

Riding with a Loose Rein. At grass horses seldom move out of a walk. To all appearances they seem perfectly content to stand still and graze, only moving on when tired of the particular patch they are eating. When brought up and back for the first time their first tendency is, not as one would think to gallop madly about, but simply to

stand still and try and buck their rider off. It usually takes some months to teach them to walk out, trot, canter and gallop fairly steadily with a man on their backs.

It is, therefore, very strange to see a large percentage of horses after being ridden some years, become, if not actual hard pullers, at least inclined "to take hold." Anything more uncomfortable and wearisome than a horse of this sort is impossible to find. It will try to walk when wanted to stand still, trot when supposed to walk, canter instead of trotting, and gallop as hard as possible when the rider merely wants to go at a respectable canter. It is, indeed, hard to connect this animal with the peaceful creature grazing in the field a few seasons back.

The explanation of it all lies in the habits that the horse has been allowed to get into. Supposing a horse is taken from the stable and let loose in a meadow the first time for some months. What happens? For the first few minutes there is a terrible commotion. He rushes madly about, kicking, squealing and making no end of a fuss. Gradually this dies down with periodic eruptions. At the end of a few hours the horse is perfectly quiet and after a day or two would hardly be recognised as the same animal. As there is no particular object in tearing about he soon gets bored with tiring himself out.

The same thing would happen eventually if a man had been riding him all the time with a loose rein. The process might take a little longer, as he would probably connect

the man with spurring, galloping, hunting and excitement generally. But he would soon cease to pull or try to get away as there would be nothing to pull at or "get away" from. Unfortunately, most people do exactly the reverse. Tightening up the reins to mount, they keep a steady hold on the mouth of any horse that seems at all excitable. They do not leave go until they dismount or *such time as they want the horse to gallop really fast*. The horse then learns to connect a loose rein with a furious gallop. As most horses like galloping, particularly in company, they soon form a bad habit, only curable by months of re-training. Unless it is especially required to collect a horse for any particular effort, such as jumping, turning or school-work, *they should always be ridden on a loose rein*, or with only the lightest possible feeling on their mouths. This is certainly a difficult matter to accomplish with a horse that is used to being ridden with what may be best described as the "10 lb. pull." However, patience with loose rein riding will work wonders; and if it does not actually cure a hard mouth it will keep a good one fresh and sensitive, besides having a very soothing effect on the temperament.

CHAPTER XII

DIFFICULT HORSES

VERY few horses are perfect. If they were riding would perhaps be much less interesting and exciting than it is now. Whether this is so or not, the fact remains that the type of remark that crops up whenever two horsey amateurs get together, is something like this: "I've got a horse that does so and so. I put a rough-edged, double-checked patent Martini gag bridiron in its mouth but it doesn't seem much good. What do you advise?" The friend will then probably reply, "Well, I've never heard of those bits, but I myself always use a fluted, smooth-bore silver one of my own invention. You can't beat them."

The number of devices, as well as bits, the beginner is told to try for the various faults in his horse is legion. Whether it is a piece of cotton tied round the animal's tongue, or weighted balls suspended in its ears, they nearly all act on the same principle. This is to give the animal pain and distract his attention from whatever is making him play up. Needless to say, these methods are quite

useless in the long run. Horses soon get deadened to their effect, and become worse than ever. People, however, will always prefer to try some short cut of a violent or semi-violent nature, to taking the trouble of finding out the real source of mischief. The last thing they want to hear is the truth. Like nervous invalids they must have medicine whether it is only coloured water or innocuous vaccine.

In desperation they sometimes take a difficult horse to a local EXPERT, often a broken-down dealer. This type of man has usually very little knowledge of horsemanship. He has probably gone on the lines that it is better to "land" a customer with a bad horse rather than try and improve it and sell it honestly.

However, by an astounding amount of talk and assurance he will succeed in imposing himself on the beginner, and by dint of not asking the horse anything very difficult he may even make it go quite well for a few moments. More than content to leave well alone, he will then dismount and convey the impression that if only the owner could ride a little bit better all would be well. It is very noticeable that he will not ask to be allowed to make a permanent cure or do anything more than offer advice of the kind mentioned above. So the real truth never gets home—that the horse was badly trained, and has become so "set" in bad habits that it will take a long course of retraining to form good ones.

The unfortunate owner will go on wasting time looking for the golden key which, he is told, is available somewhere for every horse, including his own, until he realises that such a thing does not exist.

Now it would be really far better to get rid of the horse at once. The owner will get no pleasure, and probably a great deal of unpopularity, if he takes it into the hunting field. It would be much better to get something on which he can enjoy himself. But this may not be either financially possible, or even the wish of the proud owner, who, if he is fairly new to horses, will have unlimited faith in his original judgment. The best thing, then, for him to do is to make a study of the lines on which horses, particularly hunters, are trained, and perhaps discover where his own has gone wrong.

There are plenty of books on schooling horses, all based on the same principles. Styles of riding in all branches of horsemanship have certainly altered, and it is hoped improved within recent times; but as regards actually educating the horse, the Earl of Pembroke's opinions in 1770 do not seem to differ much from Mr. Hayes in 1896, or writers of the present moment.

With all this knowledge there should be very few difficult horses about. But there are, and the reasons are worth looking into, both as a warning to youthful purchasers, and as an encouragement for them to do their won schooling.

A young horse presents a real problem to anyone wishing to educate him properly and sell him at a profit. His initial cost, if he is at all promising, will probably be about a hundred pounds. To train him thoroughly *should* take anything from one to two years. This will cost about another hundred pounds. To give a return for the work and the risk he ought now to be worth from two hundred and fifty to three hundred. But how many horses fetch anything like this figure? Unless they have a wonderful reputation and attract a fancy purchaser, their average price is very little more than that of the green horse. As the dealer knows very well, most people cannot afford to pay so much. He therefore sells horses which have been in his stable only a few weeks, cutting the price at the cost of the education.

How many horses get a regular course of schooling? Once one has been "broken," a few hunts will either make or mar him. If he shows promise, although possessing plenty of incipient faults, there is a quick turn-over and he is gone—to someone who doesn't know his past, or realise that having been sick most of last season he has really been hunted about four times, including two blank days. If he has turned out badly, he still can canter round a field without doing anything too awful. *Caveat emptor*, or in other words, only one horse in a hundred is really well schooled. With the remainder it is a case of a survival of the fittest.

The chief reasons for bad horses are—Bad Conformation, Temperament and Training.

Bad Conformation. As we have seen before, all horses have a tendency to resist or evade the rider. If, in addition, their conformation renders it easy for them to do this, the task of the trainer is harder in proportion. For instance, a horse may be so made as to find real difficulty in jumping. He will be certain then to refuse more readily and take longer to learn than another. If this is not spotted by whoever is training him, he will, if forced beyond his powers, probably turn “nappy,” and eventually become completely useless.

Most of the faults of conformation affecting the manners of the horse lie in the way he carries his head. A horse with his head and neck well set on, carries it when collected so that the bit is always in the right place and can always take maximum effect. This approximately means that the neck is about 45° to the ground and the head at 60° . The reins are now parallel to the ground, so that when the rider exerts a pull he has neither to raise his hands or lower them but simply bring them straight back towards him. If the horse has been taught to flex he will bring his head in from 60° until it is almost perpendicular to the ground. This keeps the bit in the right position, and working as intended to do on the bars of the mouth. In any other position of the head or neck

the bit is apt to slide up and take effect on the corners of the mouth, where flexion is difficult to obtain.

The following are the chief cases of faulty head carriage liable to cause "evasions or resistances."

1. *Poking the Nose.* The head is poked out like that of a dog. The bit cannot take proper effect. *The horse will not flex.* He is only controlled, as far as the bit is concerned, by a tension on the corners of the mouth.

2. *Head Held too High.* This condition means that there is no more play for the neck. Usually when stopping a horse the head is raised slightly, and the muzzle brought in by flexion. If the head can go no higher there is no further *give* to the rider. The horse can go on pulling with his head *up* as this is a natural position for this type.

3. *Head Held too Low.* Flexion again is difficult to get as the bit will tend to slide up the mouth. The reins instead of pulling in to the body will have to be used in an upward direction. In this position the horse can fight the rider exactly like a buck jumper.

4. *Over Bent.* This condition is the opposite to that when the nose is poked out.

The head is set on so that flexion will bring the jaw right in against the neck. As there is then no further play the horse is in a position to pull as hard as he likes.



OVER THE BIT
(and over bent)



GOOD HEAD CARRIAGE



POKING THE NOSE



OVERBENT



HEAD CARRIAGE
TOO HIGH

5. *One-Sidedness.* In this condition a horse will turn easier to one side than another, due, in the first instance, to bad training. If not checked, or badly ridden, he may eventually hold his head so much to one side that, whilst giving his head to one side, he pays no heed when the rider tries to turn him to the other.

Faulty head carriages of this sort are often brought on or exaggerated by bad schooling, but more frequently they are natural.

In the latter case it is not much good expecting permanent alteration, and even in the former it is usually a difficult matter. A standing martingale will hold a horse's head down, and is useful for cases of high head carriage. A running martingale brings tension on the bit from a lower angle than the hands, and induces flexion where otherwise it would be difficult to obtain. A gag has the effect of raising a horse's head, and an overhead check strap fixed on the snaffle can be used to hold a horse's head up if he resists all other efforts. But too much tackle of this kind, as well as being rather unsightly, often provokes the horse to a continual struggle, and therefore should only be used in the most extreme cases.

It is wiser, perhaps, not to try and alter the head carriage, particularly in made horses, but regard it as the reason for many of the faults in the horse, and the necessity for a great deal of extra training.

Temperament. Good Temperament is one of the most important assets in a horse. It means that he is always able to put his best into his work. An excitable horse, for instance, is unable to concentrate on what he is doing, and so, though actually capable of more, ends by achieving less than a worse type of horse with a better temperament. But temperament by itself can very often be altered, or at least controlled.

Horses are often only trying it on, and many cases of apparently bad temperament merely mean that the horse has never been properly mastered. He knows perfectly well that he has only to make a fuss for the rider to give in. He may, for instance, turn "nappy," and "play up" when turned away from home or from other horses. A little determination will soon show him that such behaviour is quite useless, and after two or three struggles he will give it up.

Excitability. Temperament is very variable, but faults in this connection usually lie near the two extremes of Excitability and Sluggishness. Of the two, the former is the easier to deal with. Good riding and plenty of exercise will generally work wonders. Moreover, as Excitement generally means "impulsiveness," the horse is, at least, up to the bit, and capable of control.

Sluggishness. A "slug," on the other hand, is just the reverse, continually refuses contact with the bit or to "use"

itself in any way. When jumping, only the minimum effort will ever be employed, often with disastrous results. In polo, the other pony will always get there first, and so on.

Vice. A really bad or vicious temperament had far better be given up at the start. Whatever methods are tried nature will out, usually at the most unfortunate moments. The horse seems to select the nastiest bit of tarmac or the busiest moment for a quarrel. A few repetitions of this sort are enough to damp the enthusiasm of the keenest novice, and the fittest solution is in the knacker's yard.

A few of the results of bad conformation, temperament or training or a combination of all three are given here, with the methods which have been found most successful in dealing with them.

Nearly all horses are disposed towards some fault or other. The older they are, the more "set" they become, and the more patience will be required to effect a cure.

Pulling. Severe bits by themselves are not much use to prevent pulling. Their effect dies out in a very short time. Once the horse has lost respect for one bit there is nothing else to be done but to go on applying something stronger. This sort of thing eventually develops into a permanent tug-of-war between man and horse, with the odds on the horse.

Horses are not so sensitive to pain as many people think, and when the nerves of their mouths are deadened, their vastly superior strength enables them to defeat a man with ease. Obviously, another system must be adopted, and the only suitable one is to train the horse to obey the indications of a light bit, holding the severe one in readiness for a special occasion.

Pulling is only a habit which a horse gets into from being *allowed* to do it. The racehorse is definitely taught to "take hold," but all other horses should be trained in the opposite way. Re-schooling is therefore the only permanent remedy for a puller, demanding and obtaining obedience from light bits instead of severe ones. As stated previously, all school-work tends to quieten a horse, whether carried out in a riding school or outside. Loose rein riding in a circle and continuous reining back whenever the horse starts to increase his pace, will have more effect than anything else. If the horse is first cured alone, the same procedure should, if possible, be repeated when there is some outside inducement to pull, such as other horses galloping past. At all events, he should be held in until his re-education is complete, at the same time being given plenty of hard work.

This takes a good deal of time, and although an interesting occupation for those fond of schooling horses, is not much help on isolated occasions. A really hard mouthed, excitable, pulling horse, is a tough proposition

for even the best horsemen. Far the best thing to do for the sake of personal comfort is to *forego* a ride of this sort at all costs. However, few horses are quite so bad as they are made out, and experience and hands as a rule will be quite sufficient to get a good deal of fun out of them.

Many horses, so-called brilliant hunters, have hardly any mouths at all, but seem to get along all right. Such a one, reputed to be a marvel, was lent by a lady to a friend. It jumped perfectly, and when hounds were running all went well. The country was open and fairly easy to cross. At other times, it simply galloped along with the rest, from cover to cover, and gate to gate, quite regardless of the rider, where or how he wanted to go. At the end of the day the tired rider asked the owner what she did when it insisted on galloping after other horses. The reply was: "Let it." And so it is with a great number of horses. Their mouths are so bad that it is a waste of time to "keep at them." Let them go along with the others, and save up new efforts for some time when they are really wanted.

The most difficult horses to hold are those which gallop with their heads in the air. Any tension on the reins makes them raise their heads still further and "chance" their fences. In these cases it is best to use a tight standing martingale and keep their heads in the position where the bit takes most effect. Tight martingales do not affect a horse's jumping capacity, and even a very tight one will

be seen to be slack at the critical period of a jump. (See Plate VIII.) But as most horses gallop with their heads rather low, merely raising them occasionally, it is quite sufficient to prevent them getting out of control. It is a mistake to keep at a horse when he is galloping hard. Far better to reserve oneself for a definite occasion, and take advantage of suitable opportunities, say a slight hill before or after a fence, and so on.

Refusing. "Refusing" is usually only another instance of evasion. A horse that refuses should be carefully examined for a possible reason. Pain from landing on bad legs, muscular pain from taking off, fear of being jobbed on the mouth, lack of confidence; all these are legitimate reasons for a horse to refuse. They should be treated sympathetically and are then easily cured. The rider must also be certain that the horse is capable of clearing every fence he takes on. All horses have their limits, and overfacing them is both foolish and brutal.

If the horse is likely to refuse from pure obstinacy, the rider must be certain that the odds are heavily in his own favour. The fence can be lowered and wings used, *but the horse must be got over somehow*. A dismounted assistant with a whip is most useful in bad cases.

When a horse refuses, he should be stopped as soon as possible and turned into the fence *against* the way he has come. Thus, if he has refused to the left he should be

turned back to the right, and vice versa. It is important to catch him before he has run out too far, and present him again quickly, as if to emphasise the necessity for jumping. He can be given a look at the fence from a standstill, and possibly threatened or struck on the flank. If he is then presented at the fence and the rider uses his legs vigorously there should be no further trouble. If there is a second refusal the same process may be gone over again, and in addition the stick used on the way up to the fence, preferably on the side to which he has run out.

It is useless to punish or hit a horse *after* a refusal. The stick is merely an aid to impulsion and collection. If the horse understood the meaning of punishment it would be just as profitable to hit him over the ears for refusing. Like any other fault in horses, refusing is best cured by forming a good habit instead of a bad one.

Many people excuse a horse for refusing to jump in cold blood. This is surely very illogical. If he is allowed to do as he likes at a jump, why not at other times as well.

Over the Bit. A horse that is over the bit is one that bends his neck downwards in the form of a semi-circle, vide Plate XIII. Any direct pull on the reins simply exaggerates this tendency. Until the horse's head can be shaken up to the proper position he can resist the rider at will. This condition is not natural, and usually means that the training has been rushed, and probably that the

horse has been badly ridden. It is simply a defence on his part, and is cured by vigorous upward use of the bridoon or snaffle during the period of re-training.

Behind the Bit. Few conditions give so much opportunity to a horse to play up as being behind the bit, as the rider is then never able to control the horse's head. This gives the horse every chance to shy, refuse, and otherwise misbehave. Usually the condition is only found in sluggish and coarse temperaments, but it does occur in excitable ones. The only remedy is plenty of free forward work, short gallops with other horses, and a demand for instant respect from the leg by following up disobedience with spur or whip. The temperament of the rider often has a great effect on that of the horse. One man seems to excite every horse he gets on, whereas another has exactly the opposite effect.

Buck Jumping. Horses that buck badly are usually those whose training has been hurried. Australian walers, for instance, are much more prone to the habit than English horses, simply because they are looked on entirely from a business point of view, and their owners cannot or will not spend time and money training them. Instead of having weeks of gentle handling before even being mounted, a young horse in Australia is probably roped in, saddled, and taken for a ten-mile ride as his first introduction to

man. Sore backs and girth galls will then prevent him being ridden again for some weeks. When he comes out again he is as fresh as ever and much more tender. In this way the habit is formed, put up with by the owner, and eventually perhaps bred into the race.

Horses will naturally buck the first few times they are mounted. If they find their efforts are ineffectual or unnecessary they will soon give it up. On the other hand, if allowed to continue, it may become a permanent and alarming habit. Having first removed any possible excuse, such as an ill-fitting saddle, bucking can easily be stopped by raising the horse's head sharply just before the buck, as a horse always bucks with it down. The habit is thus removed, and if forestalled a few times is unlikely to recur.

Rearing. Rearing is another defence adopted by the horse to evade the rider. It comes more naturally to horses that are "light" in front than others. Again, the only cure is to remove the habit by pushing the horse on a few yards whenever he braces himself for an attempt. Experience alone can give the necessary horsemanship to forestall horses on these occasions, but once prevented a few times they will soon give up this trick.

Shying. It is quite legitimate for a horse to shy at strange sights at first, but he must never be allowed to

shy without afterwards having his fears removed and made to come freely up to the dreaded object; otherwise, the habit will be formed, and horses will continue to shy at things throughout life from pure custom when a half-an-hour's work would have broken them of it at the start.

CHAPTER XIII

BITTING

THE principles of biting do not change. There is consequently little to add to what has been written in the past. But it is evident from a glance at almost any collection of horsemen that these principles are to a large extent either unknown or unappreciated. The unsuitable, ill-fitting bits so often seen, show that the subject is generally regarded as a matter of fancy. Actually, except for minor details, it is a matter of facts. These facts have been stated and proved by classic writers on horsemanship, and are discussed at length in many standard works. This chapter is merely an effort to condense them for the novice, together with hints that may be useful for practical horsemanship.

Before considering the question of biting, one of the chief principles of training again must be emphasised. That is, that the horse is not controlled by force, but is *trained* to obey the signals of the rider. A bit will not, therefore, stop him until he understands its meaning and

wants to stop. So the first consideration affecting biting is Training, or teaching the horse to obey the rider's signals. The second is for the rider to make the right signals, or Horsemanship. The third is for the signals to take effect in the best and quickest way, or Biting.

The Mouth. Before deciding to use any particular bit the mouth should always be examined. Injuries may continue for weeks unnoticed, and entirely alter the attitude of the horse towards the bit. Any soreness or cut will soon heal up, owing to the healing powers of the mouth itself, and if rinsed out occasionally with a disinfectant.

Some horses develop a condition known as Dry Mouth. These are generally the ones that do not flex properly. When they gallop about and get hot and tired, as at polo, there is no play or give in their mouths, which very often become absolutely dry. Needless to say, this is a very injurious condition, as the mouth seems to go suddenly quite dead. Extra force is sometimes unwittingly used which may leave bruises that take effect when the mouth "comes to." Horses should, therefore, be encouraged to flex and also play with the bit. This can be induced by providing a bit with little keys or pieces of string hanging down from it. The horse then works his tongue about, which produces a more or less permanent supply of saliva.

Getting the Tongue over the Bit. A great deal of fuss is often made because horses get their tongues over the bit.

Particular bridles are used to stop the habit, often without success. Beyond being sometimes unsightly and rather tiresome, there seems to be no need to take violent objection to it. The horse cannot get the bit out of his mouth nor can he prevent it taking effect in the right place. Moreover, if left alone he will generally give up the habit if he has other things to think about. The best thing, particularly in old horses, is not to worry about it.

Bits. There are many different types of bits in common use. As they are mostly based on the double bridle this one should be understood first. Any deficiencies in its character, provided they are first understood, can be corrected by a more suitable bridle later. In this way the right bit may possibly be hit on at once and considerable time and trouble saved. Instead, many people *try out* a vast armoury of bits, like the man who tasted all the medicines in the chemist's shop to see which one did the most good.

Though every new patent has its followers, a fresh bit seldom comes up to expectations. A horse that is difficult in one, is generally much the same in another, after a few days.

A horse should be bitted according to principle, and the action of the bit carefully thought out. For instance, a horse that is over the bit and carries his head low will have this fault accentuated by a bit with a curb. A snaffle

instead would probably raise the head into the right place, where the horse could be easily controlled. The action of each as explained below ought to be thoroughly understood. If the rider also takes into account the Conformation and Temperament of his horse when biting him, he has the satisfaction of knowing for certain that he is in the right, and that the horse is being given every chance to go well.

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A Double Bridle is composed of a bridoon or snaffle and a plain bit. The action of each is as follows:

The Snaffle. A snaffle or bridoon acts on the corners of the mouth. Being broken in the middle tension on the reins tends to make the two parts come together in nut-cracker fashion and squeeze the sides of the mouth. It is therefore much more severe than if it consisted only of a straight unbroken bar which would not have this squeezing effect. As there is no curb to keep it in place it tends to slide up the mouth. Flexion is therefore almost impossible with this bridle, as the horse is encouraged to hold his head out straight in line with his neck. Also, as it acts on the lips, which are not very sensitive, it encourages a horse to "take hold" and lean on the hand. It is, therefore, suitable for racing when used by itself. If used for schooling hunters and ponies, stopping, reining back and so on, the upward tendency previously mentioned has the effect of permanently raising the horse's head and neck

without bringing the nose in at the same time. Consequently it is rarely seen on hunters in England, where wire, tarmac roads, etc., make balance, collection and control so important; and never on polo ponies for the same reason.

Many people use a snaffle because they think it less painful than a bit. This is beside the point, and not necessarily correct. A piece of wire in a horse's mouth can be more painful than a bit, but it is not nearly so effective. Pain has nothing to do with the case. A snaffle acts in the wrong place to get the greatest control of a well-made horse. It is less effective for that reason and not because it is less painful.

The Bit. The bit of a double bridle should hang slightly lower in the mouth than the bridoon or snaffle so that the curb chain rests in the natural groove just above the chin. The curb chain should be adjusted from the near side and twisted towards the right. The end should be hooked on first and then the adjusting link. It is important that the chain should lie flat and smooth on the groove when it comes into action. To ensure this the links when being hooked on must be kept turned to the right. The curb chain should be sufficiently tight to come up against the groove when the cheek pieces are pulled back to about 45°. *The chief object of the bit is to produce Flexion*, and this is best attained when the bit and curb chain are fitted

in the manner here described. Many people wear their curb chains longer, sometimes so long that they do not take effect at all. This is done under the impression that they are being extra kind to their horses, but is really only a stupid habit. The only result is that the bit ceases to be a bit at all. It becomes even milder than a snaffle, as, being rigid and not broken in the middle, the squeezing effect of the snaffle does not occur. Further, having no curb to keep it in place, it slides up the mouth and acts on the lips instead of the bars. Flexion is then impossible to obtain. It would have been much better, therefore, to put a snaffle on the horse from the first. Why an ordinary bit should ever be thought cruel or severe is difficult to understand. If a horse is to be ridden at all, it should be bitted and ridden correctly. Again, the effect of a bit depends largely on the hands of the rider. If these are good they will act with due regard for the particular severity of the bit that is being used, and the horse will not suffer. If they are not good, he will get a bad time in any bit.

A bit is usually made with a port or tongue groove in the middle. This allows it to come right down on the bars of the mouth instead of being partially supported by the tongue, as it would be if it was simply a straight bar. This port is sometimes made very high. When the bit turns round in the mouth the top of the port then presses on to the roof of the mouth making it a great deal more

severe. Flexion is better effected when the bit is low in the mouth than when it is high. This is its chief function. It is therefore very important to have it low in the mouth rather than too high, where its effect becomes more like that of a snaffle. It is often said that a horse with short lips is certain to have a good mouth. This is probably because the whole mouth is smaller and the bit will hang proportionately lower down than on other horses. The bit also has the tendency in time *to make the horse lower his whole head and neck.*

The Double Bridle. When the snaffle and bit are combined to form a double bridle they can still be used separately or together. The rider can thus:

- (1) Raise the head and neck.
- (2) Lower the head and neck.
- (3) Flex the head and jaw Directly and Indirectly.
- (4) Combine (1) and (3), i.e. Raise the head and flex it at the same time. (This is often necessary when schooling young horses.)

Both bit and bridoon can be made *less* severe by covering them with rubber, though this is quite unnecessary for the latter. They can be made *more* severe by using a twisted bridoon, or even a gag, and a bit with long cheek pieces and a high port.

The Double Bridle is therefore very excellent and practical. It contains almost all the functions the ordinary

horseman can ever want. It can be made light or severe according to taste, and will be found in practice to suit the great majority of horses. Before discarding the double bridle the beginner should, therefore, make quite certain he is going to try something better. The double bridle not only is good but *looks* good. A horse ridden in a severe-looking, complicated bit, plainly shows that something is wrong, either the rider or the horse. A simple bit is always preferable to any other.

The double bridle should therefore be sufficient in itself for all ordinary needs, and in practice it usually is. As horses with good mouths and manners nearly always go best on a double bridle, it may therefore be regarded as a standard.

There are, however, many other bits whose particular action is designed to meet individual peculiarities of conformation or temperament. Each of these has many varieties of make and shape but the most important ones are as follows:

The Pelham. This is a single bit. The top rein acts directly on the bar of the bit like a snaffle and the bottom rein on the cheek pieces like an ordinary bit. It functions like a double bridle except that:

- (1) The squeezing effect of the snaffle is absent.
- (2) The horse's head cannot be both raised and flexed at the same time.

It is not, therefore, used much for schooling young horses, where this latter function is often necessary. On the other hand, as it consists of only one piece, this can be made broader and thicker than either the bridoon or bit without adding to its weight. It then rests on a larger surface of the mouth, and is consequently less severe than the bit of a double bridle. It is, therefore, unsuitable for schooling horses, but being light, is generally used on polo ponies.

The IXth Lancer. A single bit which acts like the ordinary bit of a double bridle, both reins, top and bottom, being fixed on the cheek pieces. It is, therefore, fairly severe. Being in one piece it is light in weight, and suitable for a polo pony that needs something more severe than a Pelham.

The Banbury Bit. This bit is usually used with a bridoon like a double bridle. The bit slides in grooves in the cheek pieces and as these also act independently of one another, the bar of the bit is thus constantly shifting. An unequal pull can then be put on either rein. It therefore suits a horse inclined to set his jaw against the rider, either directly or to one side. It is supposed that he cannot get hold of the bit to set himself against it and so should give up the attempt.

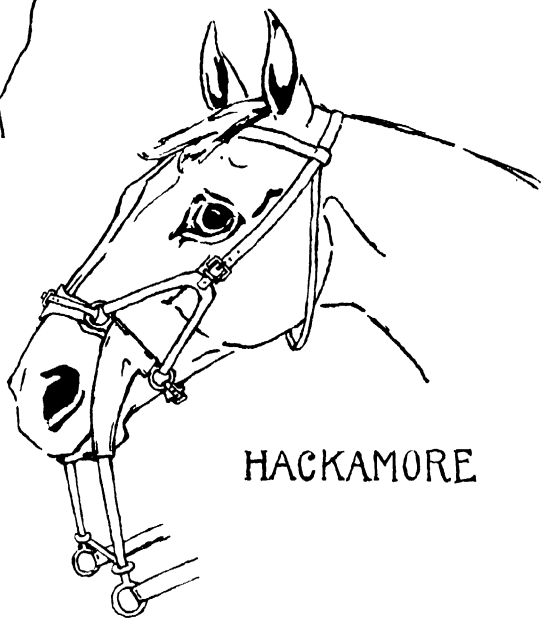
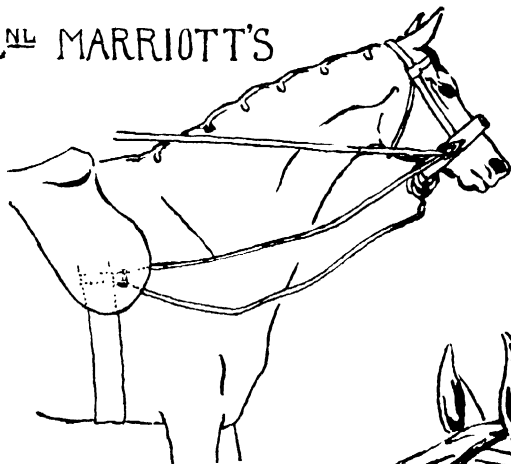
The Dropped Noseband. Horses often evade their riders when flexing by giving the jaw but not the whole head.

To do this they simply open their mouths and relax the lower jaw alone. This is a very difficult habit to overcome with the hands only, especially in cases of long standing. The best cure is a strap tied between the bit and snaffle round the muzzle tight enough to keep the mouth shut. It is supported by a head-stall like an ordinary noseband, is an extremely simple arrangement and a really useful one for many bad pullers.

The Kineton Noseband. The Kineton Noseband is used with a snaffle. The effects are—(1) A tension on the snaffle also brings pressure low down on to the front of the nose where it is particularly sensitive. (2) The two rings at each side of the noseband tend to slide towards the centre of the snaffle when the horse is pulled up hard. These two rings then press on the side of the nose and partially stop the breathing. It is useful for bad pullers and runaways.

The Gag. A gag is a snaffle or bridoon in which the reins run diametrically and freely through the rings and are then attached to the head-stall. Any pull on the reins forces the snaffle upwards. The upward tendency of any snaffle is thus intensified. In addition, the effect is mechanically increased by the pulley-like way it works. The snaffle rings become almost the same as pulley rings, so the tension on the snaffle is almost doubled.

COL^{NL} MARRIOTT'S



HACKAMORE

There are two forms of bridle which are particularly interesting, as they illustrate the two principal theories of biting in a striking manner.

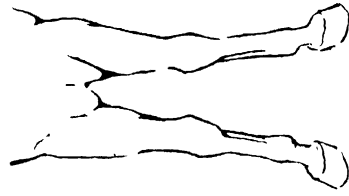
- (1) They control the horse entirely through flexion, thereby demonstrating its importance.
- (2) They show that a painful bit is quite unnecessary, by omitting to provide one at all. (See Plate XIV.)

These two bridles are the Hackamore and Col. Mariott's Bitless Bridle. They are both practical bridles, which are particularly useful for horses when it is desired to give polo ponies' mouths a rest after hard playing or schooling.

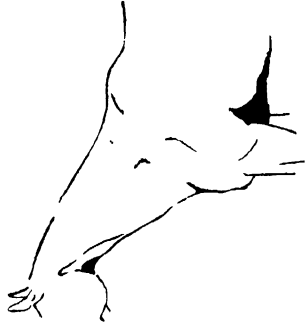
CHAPTER XIV

HINTS ON BUYING HORSES FOR BEGINNERS

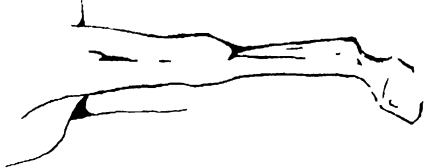
PERHAPS the best advice for a young friend proposing to buy a horse is—Don't; that is, if he insists on buying it himself. Everything is against him getting good value for his money, more especially the man who is selling the animal. This may be rather a harsh statement, but in the majority of cases painfully true. Buying a house, a motor, a seat at a theatre is buying something. A horse, if it turns out badly, may easily be buying not only nothing, but nothing that costs £2 a week to keep. The difficulty is to acquire sufficient judgment to buy horses without paying for it too heavily. An ordinary article is labelled and marked down at a fixed price. It is easy to see if it is good or not. If unsatisfactory, it can be taken back and another issued in place. This is not so with horses. It takes years of practice to know how much they are worth. If they break, no one will take them back. So the buyer has to look out for himself and compete with the seller on equal terms.



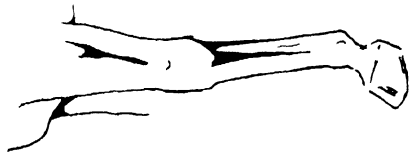
TURNED-OUT TOES



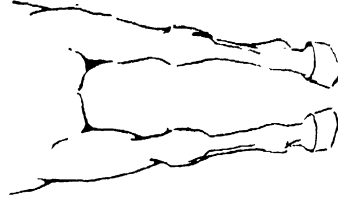
GOOD SHOULDER



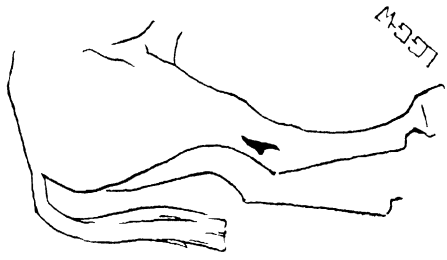
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HINTS ON BUYING FOR BEGINNERS 123

Now this is a difficult matter; as the latter has usually been at it all his life. Moreover, there is an extraordinary fascination about buying horses that is apt to warp the judgment. First, there is the ordinary delight at having money enough to buy anything. But a horse, a real horse with mane and tail, and what not. What fun it will be riding him in a few days' time. Then the glamour of the whole business. "I bought a very nice horse the other day at Pinchers. Very good horse too; won five point-to-points last year in Ireland, only times run: I should like you to come and have a look at him," you say to all your friends. It will be quite the chief topic of conversation among them for at least a week, and alluded to pretty often after that. "Have you seen that young horse of Simpleton's. It *is* a nice horse. You know what it did in Ireland?" etc., etc. Then there is the seller. His attitude is that he simply cannot understand why you are so long about it. Can't you see what a wonderful animal this is? You look stupid, but you can't be so dense as all this. Don't you realise he's here wasting valuable time just because he wants you to get what you want and come again another time?

His personality finally wins. You gasp and hear yourself saying, "You *will* have it vetted, won't you?" The dealer, however, is gone. He can't waste time talking to you in your Baby Austin when a Daimler has just rolled into his yard. You wonder faintly if you have done right.

However, when the horse arrives home you feel excited and pleased. After all you *have* done something. You haven't just sat at home thinking about things. No, by Jove, you always did get things done. Not like some people who simply do nothing, never take any exercise or interest in anything except a glass of port. You spend the first day going to and from the horse's box. Your spirits rise higher each time with returning self-confidence. You wonder if the dealer hasn't made a mistake. This horse might quite easily win the Grand National, if only it will jump. But that costs too much to enter anyway. But for all that, you're a snip for all the point-to-points, that is quite certain, so there's no need to worry any more. You go to bed still dreaming and scheming. Next day you tell your friend, an oldish man who you know is a marvellous judge of horses. He may be your Colonel, and you ask him to come and have a look at the horse. He seems faintly complimented with the idea, extremely interested, and puts several questions as you go along. What is its breeding? No, he has never heard of the Sire. Where did you get it from? Pinchers? Did you know young Dudley's horse came from there and was destroyed yesterday? No, you didn't. Where were the point-to-points it had won and so on.

The horse is brought out. You wait on tip-toe, listening for a burst of admiration. Your friend, however,

gives a long critical look, purses his mouth, turns round severely and says, "But why did you buy *that* horse?" as much as to say any other would have done, but not that. Shocked and slightly ruffled, you ask what is wrong. "My dear fellow, can't you see? The horse is not up to your weight. It couldn't carry your boots. Put your hand round its bone." Yes, it's perfectly true, there isn't much bone, but then a well-bred horse never has much. What else? The horse is walked and trotted up. "Did you see him walked up when you bought him?" Yes, you did but you didn't see anything peculiar. Is there anything wrong? "Oh, he turns his toes in, crosses his legs, nods on the near fore and goes close behind; he has no middle, is back at the knee and long in the pasterns. His head is common and badly set on to his neck, which is much the same shape as that horse of Blinks' that has just gone in the wind. His ribs also are badly sprung, and his quarters so weak, and his hocks so mean, that it is hard to believe he could ever jump a stick." The critic now breaks off. He refuses to look more deeply in case of upsetting you. "I can't think why you young fellows don't ask someone before you go rushing off like this. Anyone would help you. I couldn't have gone myself, of course, but Dick, or Jack would. I'm awfully sorry about it. Cost a lot, too, I expect!" he says, turning away. "Do ask someone another time."

Of course you think he is mistaken. The horse is bound to turn out all right, do a season's hunting and win several races at the end of it. You hear yourself saying, "Yes, bought the horse at Pinchers. No, didn't pay much, but of course wouldn't sell him now under £500. Won every race it's been entered for. Lovely ride and such a performer." But the friend was right. One day's hunting was quite enough. An old strain on the near fore that he turned in so, came up again. In spite of cabbage leaf poultices, Ouateplasms, Save the Horse, Antiphlogistin, Hot and Cold water, and every possible remedy, that near fore never got quite right. You weren't able to run him in the point-to-points, and when put up to auction in disgust (after six months' hard work trying to get him right) he fetched exactly £25.

This is not a mythical case. It has happened, and will always happen, to almost everyone who starts buying horses before they know enough about them. Once or twice does not matter. A few hundred pounds gone in this way is money well spent. The thing to avoid is to go on doing it to the end of your life or purse, both of which are almost identical where horses are concerned.

The first thing is to realise that every horse has a value. Actually it has two values. One real and the other a fancy one, according to the place, season, or whim of the buyer. The latter can never be relied on. A horse worth £50 might fetch £200 if someone was in a hurry to buy

him. Because he has one white sock and a stripe down the middle of his back is no guarantee that there will be a rush on him. But the real value does not change so much, and the man who can assess this correctly will never lose much money over horses.

Young horses are, of course, the most difficult ones to buy. A made hunter or polo pony offers a practical test at once, particularly the latter. If it is easy to play and fast, there is something to go on, and the other ponies on the field to compare it with. (Moral—Never buy a horse without a good trial.) Age can then be taken into account, with seven years as the high water mark, and a fair idea formed of the correct price. With a hunter it is obviously more difficult. It can only be compared with past experience. Looks, in this case, probably count for more than in the polo pony. So there is immediately a complication of looks, age, and performance to weigh up in the mind. It is difficult to state clearly all the considerations that affect the ultimate decision. The net result of the various additions and subtractions stands out quickly and clearly to the experienced man. The broad principles to go on are that, given everything else, the biggest prices are paid for the best bred horses up to the most weight, the medium prices for the good performers, and the lowest for those with a “doubt,” an “if” or a “crab.”

Well-bred horses cost a lot, not only because they are faster than the common sort, but because they are

more comfortable and nicer to ride. Every unpleasant trick of the latter is notably absent. The shambling and clumsy paces, the occasional bursts of mulish obstinacy, the natural insensitiveness and general lack of impulsion and go, are faults which are usually found in some degree or form among common horses, but much less often in the thoroughbred. Moreover, as stated in a previous chapter, it is very difficult for the well-made horse to resist or evade the wishes of the man on his back. The conformation of the thoroughbred, therefore, again helps him to become what he undoubtedly is, the ideal riding horse.

Against this, there is his naturally excitable temperament and unsuitability as a weight carrier. As a hunter has to be just the opposite, naturally quiet and capable of carrying weight for long hours at a stretch, it is very rare to find one that is absolutely thoroughbred. When he exists, he is the ideal thing, and has to be paid for accordingly.

The medium-priced horse may be, perhaps, described as one that can do his job but no more. He has lots of quality, manners, and performs well, but has no scope. He will neither win a point-to-point nor a prize in a good show. He is probably the most reliable horse to buy, as he will give no disappointments and will always sell well.

The cheap horse should be avoided, if possible, altogether. He costs as much to keep as a good one, and this, spread over a period of years, amounts to much more than the price of even the most expensive sort. In addition,

there is the constant worry attached to him. Somehow or other he will let you down, particularly if badly bred. The only possibility in this class is "the good screw." It often happens that a high class horse breaks down badly. When he recovers he has probably been fired or blemished in some way, and remains technically unsound for life. He can never command a high price, and his defects are plain for everyone to see. Here, then, is a horse for a beginner, which can give him the right idea of the qualities to expect, and with care and handling, may last a long while.

The most difficult horse to buy is the young one that has not been backed. The only trial that can be given is to watch his action as he gallops round a field. The rest is pure judgment. Faults must, therefore, be scrutinised with a far more exacting eye than is necessary for the horse that has proved himself. A toe turned in now means an uneven strain on the ligaments of that leg, which will take effect sometime or other. Besides which, as the horse grows, so do the faults. The head which appeared large before becomes enormous. The legs which seemed a trifle light of bone unfortunately do not grow in size and thickness like the body. Their slenderness is proportionately exaggerated every year until he is full grown. In the common horse these faults become more pronounced without the redeeming carriage and action of the thoroughbred. Nowadays the quality of the hunter continually

gets better. Owing, possibly, to the elimination of the light type of harness horse and the small numbers bought for the Army, there is no market for the inferior sort. It is, therefore, more important than ever to buy good breeding. Finally, remember the future. Having bought your young horse there is no reason to be *married* to him, as someone vulgarly put it. If you get him too young, no matter how well he is schooled, nor what he has done, or how good his legs, no one will want him until he is five years old at least. If he arrives as a three-year-old he will be on your hands an extra year, filling in time. Therefore, never buy him under four years old and rising five.

Perhaps the following Do's and Don'ts will help the beginner to choose wisely:

Buy

1. Good breeding.
2. Good temperament.
3. Good, true action.
4. Good shoulder.
5. Weight-carrying power.
6. Small head well set on.
7. Short straight legs.
8. Good feet.
9. Deep girth.
10. Power and muscle.

Never Buy

1. Bad temperament.
2. Untrue action.
3. Badly set on head and neck.
4. A horse not up to your weight.
5. A horse that gives a bad feel, particularly jumping.
6. A bad shoulder and short rein.

Never buy a horse without a veterinary certificate, and see both the certificate and the veterinary surgeon if possible before accepting the horse. The latter is being employed by you, not the owner.

CHAPTER XV

RIDING LESSONS FOR CHILDREN

THE importance of taking trouble over everything connected with children's riding can hardly be overestimated. As everyone knows, the impressions of childhood are far more vivid than those of a later age. Likes or dislikes, confidence or fear, whichever takes root will probably remain for life. To get the best results the subject should be approached with the greatest care from every point of view. This would seem too obvious to mention except that it is not always done. Children who are naturally bold and strong are denied a pony until it is too late and another craze has seized them. Others, largely to gratify their parents' pride, are crammed on to a pony almost as soon as they can walk. The inevitable falls are regarded as a great joke by the grown-ups. One has even heard of children breaking bones at the tender age of six. Though this is an exception, surely any possibility of it happening should be avoided at all costs. As Jorrocks rightly says,

“a fall’s a h’awful thing,” and though some people manage to take hundreds during their lives, they generally find each one less desirable than the last.

A glimpse at a children’s class in any of the country horse shows should teach most parents a lot. Though the ring has quite a limited area, two or three of the ponies usually succeed in bolting round it until stopped by anxious fathers or sympathetic onlookers. Several more are obviously going at a considerably faster pace than their riders would like. Finally, on leaving the ring there are generally one or two falls and a few tears. The whole affair is then forgotten by everyone, except the children themselves. Though none of these episodes is very terrible, more harm can be done from this sort of thing than is possibly appreciated at the time. It is essential to begin right at everything. The best age to begin riding must vary enormously with the child. Some children who are naturally nervous and weak are only spoilt by over encouragement. On the other hand, the bolder ones, if denied a pony, will probably take up some other amusement, and never learn what a lot they missed. It is, therefore, entirely a question for the parents to decide. Though from a purely riding point of view there is perhaps little use starting before ten or twelve years of age; children that start to ride early and are continually playing about with their pony learn confidence, which is after all the first thing in riding. Moreover, as they get enor-

mous pleasure out of it, why not start them as soon as is practicable?

Children who are naturally keen will usually ride any sort of animal sooner than none at all. But it is a great mistake not to take endless trouble to find the right sort for them. Most children's ponies are stuffy little animals, about as strong in proportion to their tiny riders as a young cart horse would be to a recruit. Every time they see a bit of extra luscious-looking grass down go their heads, the reins are wrenched from their riders' fists and they are free to gallop off. Leading reins make them perfectly safe, but a child led about on a rein does not improve much. It is a feeling of confidence in their *own* powers that makes children keen and bold later on. It is, therefore, better to get a pony that they can soon learn to manage entirely by themselves than use a leading rein on one they can't. The modern child's pony is a narrow, breedy animal, like a well-bred polo pony in miniature. Mere height has not much to do with the size of a pony between the rider's legs. A comparatively well-bred pony with a good temperament and light mouth is generally nice and narrow to ride. The stocky common sort are nearly always very broad in proportion to their height, and have the usual unpleasant characteristics of all common horses. But the chief asset in any child's pony is temperament. This must be absolutely perfect, that is to say, not too keen and not too sluggish, but ready to go or stop

with the slightest indication. The good child's pony is certainly difficult to find, but invaluable for its purpose when it does turn up.

The right feeding is very important for all animals, but particularly in this case. Grooms are often inclined to give too much corn in order to get sleek coats, particularly as they do not ride much themselves. Even the quietest pony can be spoilt in this way. Except when being hunted regularly it is probably best, and certainly cheapest, to turn the pony out into a small paddock and let his young owner saddle him up whenever he likes. Even then the merest handful of oats is sufficient. Ponies, like the small breeds of nearly every species, are a great deal stronger, hardier, and more enduring in proportion to their size than their full grown cousins. Whatever may be the reason for this, it is none the less a fact, and, when the extreme lightness of the weight that has to be carried is also taken into account, it is not surprising that most people of experience in the matter forbid all corn for their children's ponies.

As regards saddlery, this is often too much of the donkey-on-the-sands type. Three or four inches of numnah and saddle with knee rolls, etc., only retard progress in horsemanship, and also widen the distance between the knees. A light saddle close to the pony is much preferable except in the case of tiny children of, say, 6-10 years of age, when it is a case of getting familiar with

the idea rather than learning to ride. The question of biting can only be decided at the time, but a child's pony should never require a severe bit. For ponies that duck their heads suddenly an overhead check is most useful, and very often a necessity. Similarly, a standing martingale is a wise precaution against ponies that toss their heads, and often prevents the child getting a nasty blow in the face.

Finally, there is the question of instruction. Though this need not be of a very serious character, and should never be in the slightest degree boring, it is important to implant the right ideas. Simple, straight-forward riding with stirrups and a little jumping is all that is required, but even this should be properly taught. Many children are handed over to grooms or receive expensive lessons from instructors of very doubtful ability. As the riding experience of these men is usually limited to a few hours' daily exercise, their knowledge and methods of teaching sometimes leave much to be desired. The importance of having a good instructor who knows his subject thoroughly is immense. Unless carefully taught, children will often seize and exaggerate trifling details which appeal to them and neglect the main points. They may be told, for instance, not to grip with the calf of the leg. All that is meant by this is not to grip with the *back* of the calf, thus forcing the knee out and away from the saddle. But in their eagerness to do the right thing a child may quite

probably ride ever afterwards with the whole of the lower leg well away from the saddle. Later, when riding strong horses and going into the subject properly, and realising the necessity for a firm seat he will be disconcerted to find that early riding has not been of much use after all, as he has been allowed to get into bad habits like the above. This instance is not hypothetical. It has actually happened to several young horsemen of the writer's acquaintance, much to their detriment. There is no other subject where such conflicting ideas and theories, they might almost be called superstitions, get about, generally from slipshod instruction. Nowadays, there are many places where really good teaching can be had for no extra expense, and if this is not available, personal supervision by parents on the lines previously mentioned, though very much modified, is far better than the unqualified efforts of ignorant men.

One of the great advantages of riding for children is its cheapness and simplicity. Very little more is wanted than a small grass paddock, a pony and some patience.

Too much instruction is a bad thing, and in its place a lot can be done by making children develop along natural lines.

Mounted games can be encouraged or invented, varying from the one where the hero waves a handkerchief and tries to prevent it being captured by the remainder, to children's polo, which has already been started in different localities.

When sufficiently advanced, two or three hurdles, sloped according to the height that is required, form an admirable fence, and with a few more hurdles and a few light poles a lane of such fences can easily be made. The pony will soon learn to gallop freely and smoothly straight down an affair of this sort in order to receive a small feed at the other end, and his young rider will probably enjoy the growing feeling of self-confidence with each attempt.

CHAPTER XVI

SIDESADDLE OR ASTRIDE

A BRIEF consideration of the chief facts about riding sidesaddle is as follows.

First, there is the question of appearance. This is most important. People certainly owe it to their horses, if to no one else, to make the most of themselves. A Frenchman who was ragged about being so immaculate in the tropics was quite right when he said, "I do not dress for you, I dress for ze 'orse."

Possibly one's ideas on this subject are influenced by custom, or else are startled by the vagaries of fashion in astride dress, but it certainly seems that a good sidesaddle outfit is as near perfection as possible. This advantage from the woman's point of view may perhaps be more than outweighed by the extra discomfort. This is not confined to the rider. The horse gets his share too. Sore backs are much more frequent and much worse when they do occur from a sidesaddle than a plain one. Though an offside stirrup may be a great help when not actually

hunting, the fact remains that as the rider sidesaddle is in a twisted position she must become somewhat uncomfortable after a certain time. Moreover, sidesaddle riding is more of a business altogether. Generally speaking the rider has to be helped up and down, and can never get off to rest herself or her horse once she is up, a great drawback for long days. But these considerations are relatively unimportant compared to the practical value of the sidesaddle.

Here the rider starts off with a tremendous advantage. This is, she starts straightway with a firm seat. A woman sidesaddle has a stronger seat than almost any man from the very first day she starts to ride. Besides which there is no preliminary spadework to be done or very little. No trotting or jumping without stirrups to get a grip. The pommels are especially made to hold the rider in the saddle which they do even if the body balance is all wrong. It is very rare to see a woman jumped off or bucked off and it is, perhaps, largely for this reason that ladies riding sidesaddle are credited with such wonderful hands. The probability is, that as it is almost impossible for them to lose their seats they can really make their hands effective whenever they wish; in the meanwhile their confidence is such that they are quite content to leave their horses alone.

The one essential for the sidesaddle is a good horse. It must be one that is capable of doing all that is required with the least assistance from the rider. This is not intended

to cast a slur on the horsemanship of sidesaddle riders but simply to point out the difficulty they have in turning a horse quickly, keeping its quarters from flying out or getting the best out of an unwilling one. The sidesaddle rider has no legs or practically no legs (one leg and a whip), so she is naturally handicapped whenever these are necessary. To put it brutally when real horsemanship is required the rider must be astride.

There is one more way that the rider astride scores heavily, and that is the question of expense. The saddle costs less, the habit less, even the horse costs less astride. Moreover, people will often lend horses to ladies who ride well astride where they would think twice about it if they rode the other way.

However, it is unlikely that the sidesaddle will ever go out. It looks better, is easier to learn, and for the majority of women is far more suitable. It is only the few, who are physically adapted and prepared for the long and somewhat tedious business of learning, who can ever aspire to be expert horsewomen astride.

APPENDIX I

DEFINITIONS OF THE AIDS

1. Aids are the indications by means of which the horse is made to understand by the rider what he is required to do. They consist of the correct motions of the hands, application of the legs, and disposal of weight; to direct and determine the horse's movements and paces.

The aids are—(a) Natural, including the application of the hands, body, voice, whip, legs, and spurs. (b) Artificial, including martingales and other artificial appliances.

2. The hands, by means of the reins, control the horse's forehand—i.e. his head, neck, and shoulders. They guide, check, or assist the horse to increase or decrease his pace. They alter the horse's balance by moving the head up or down or to one side. They achieve their object by acting, resisting, or yielding. They act when, by an increased tension on the reins, they check the pace. They resist when they remain firm and still—i.e. when preventing an increase of pace on the application of the legs, and thereby make, or should make, a well-trained horse, with a good

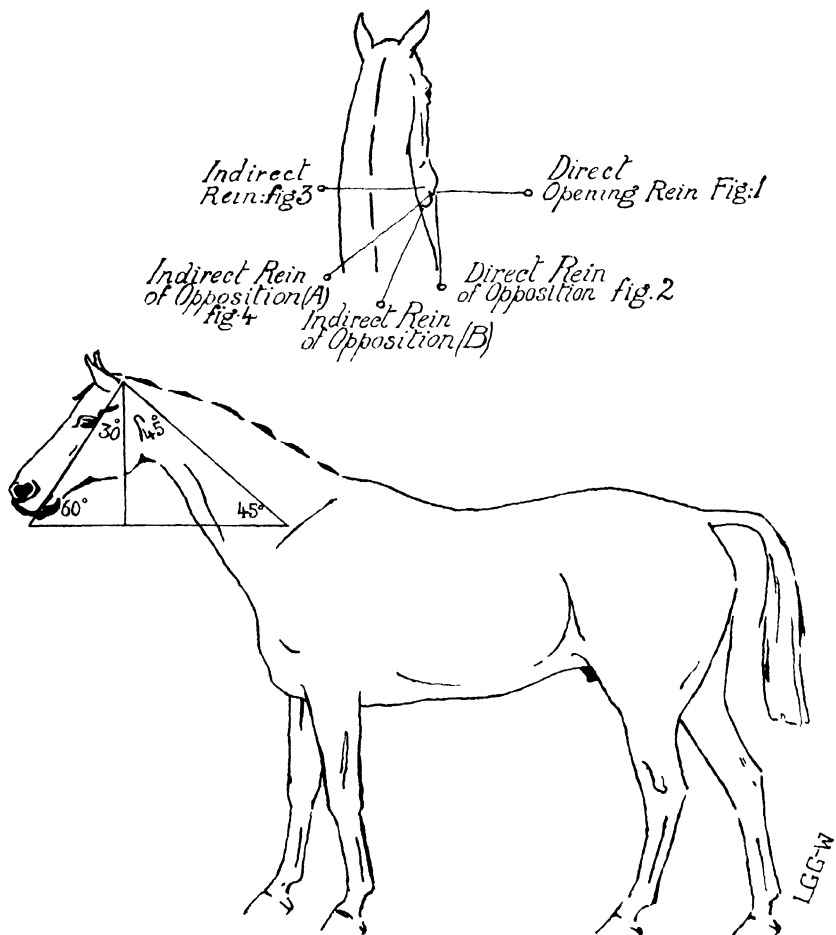
mouth, flex and give his jaw to the rider, as in "trotting short." They yield when they allow free movement of the head as in jumping.

3. The hands should always be used in a give-and-take manner, with wrists bent and flexible and the fingers supple. When a horse takes hold of the bit and attempts to run away, the rider must ease his hand only to feel the reins again when the horse has momentarily given his jaw. A long pull, however strong, seldom stops a runaway horse, but a succession of sharp light touches on the mouth and the reins, used so as to raise the horse's head, will. At the same time, a horse should never be given in to, and a horse is just as likely to be spoilt by feeble and undetermined handling as by violent methods. The common faults of all riders are strong hands and weak legs. The latter fault is mostly noticeable with the man who is continually using the spur. The best example of these faults are—(1) a horse being allowed to refuse often at a jump through lack of determination of the rider; (2) a man trying to turn a horse the right about, and when taken the opposite way does not immediately make the horse turn properly.

4. *The Action of the Legs.*

The legs are employed in a similar manner to the hands. They act, resist, and yield. They act when their pressure is increased to cause the horse to move. They resist when their pressure is exerted to prevent or limit dis-

THE DIFFERENT REINS USED IN EQUITATION



POSITION OF HEAD: WELL-TRAINED HORSE OF GOOD CONFORMATION

PLATE 16

DIRECT AND INDIRECT REINS AND POSITION OF HEAD

placement of the hindquarters. When both legs are used, they have the effect of impelling the horse forward in a straight line. When one leg acts, say the right, it has the effect of impelling the horse to the left.

5. The weight of the body is a powerful aid, and is used by shifting the normal balance of a horse in a given direction. Like all other aids, it must not be used violently or overdone.

6. The spur has to enforce what the leg fails to do. It should only be used—(1) in a horse badly trained to the leg; (2) as an extra aid to the leg. It should never be used violently, and as seldom as possible, or the horse becomes callous to its use.

7. The use of the voice is invaluable in training a young horse or with any horse trained to obey it. Too much use cannot be made of it.

8. The whip should be used similarly to the spur.

9. A horse is said to be collected when his full powers are concentrated and entirely controlled between hand and leg of the rider. He should then be fit and ready to perform instantaneously any movement that he is capable of carrying out, as in the position of attention.

10. A balanced horse is a horse which, with the rider in the saddle, so holds himself as to be able to obey with greatest ease to himself and comfort to his rider any aid applied by the latter. To attain this, he must have the

correct head carriage and place his legs correctly. A badly-made horse cannot attain perfect balance, but all horses should be trained up to the limit of their capacity.

11. *The Application of the Aids.*

No definite rule should be laid down as to the exact application of the aids, as each horse requires riding in a different way. One horse is a slug, and requires the whip and strong leg pressure; another is excitable, and requires coaxing and the use of the voice only. The aim of every rider should be to get the best out of his horse by a tactful but determined use of all the aids at his disposal in their proper proportion according to the needs of the moment.

12. *Harmony of the Aids.*

The aids must be used in harmony with one another. The hands, legs, and body should co-operate towards the end to be attained—i.e. if the legs act to create forward movement, the hands must first yield to allow that forward movement. When the necessary movement has been created, the hands must resist to check any excess. Before demanding any movement of the horse, the rider must pose or place him physically in such a position that it is easy for him to carry out correctly the desired movement.

13. The results of tension applied in various directions are described below. Some of these tensions are in use

in the actual aids, and some are not. All should be known, as the latter are frequently useful in riding awkward horses, and the ill-effects of using the wrong tension can be better appreciated. (See Plate XVI.)

FIG. 1—DIRECT OPENING REIN

Tension is exerted to the right. The horse's head and neck are turned, and on further tension his whole forehand. Used in turning a horse on the haunches—i.e. if a horse is stationary and the left supporting leg is used in conjunction with this rein, the horse turns on the haunches. Also the first method of turning an untrained horse.

FIG. 2—DIRECT REIN OF OPPOSITION

Tension is exerted somewhat to the right and towards the rider's body. The weight of the head and neck is thrown back on to the horse's shoulder. If the horse is stationary at the time, he will, on application of this rein, turn on the forehand or centre. If on the move, he will slacken the pace, turn sharp to the right, with his hind-quarters following outside the track of his fore-feet.

FIG. 3—INDIRECT REIN

The right rein is carried forward and to the left, and tension is exerted to the left. The horse's nose is turned

to the right, but the weight of the head and neck is thrown on to the left shoulder. Further tension has the same effect on the horse's movement as the opening rein, though his head is differently placed. It is this rein that is used chiefly in turning a horse when all the reins are held in one hand.

FIG. 4—THE INDIRECT REIN OF OPPOSITION

When the right rein is carried over to the left side of a horse, and a backward tension is exerted, the effects vary according to whether the rein is drawn in front or behind the withers.

With the rein drawn:

(a) In front of the withers. If the horse is stationary the horse will, on application of this rein, turn to the left and move backwards at the same time. The quarters will go round to the right. If on the move, the horse will turn to the left, but slacken his pace.

(b) Behind the withers and tension exerted toward the rider's groin. If the horse is stationary, the horse will, on application of this rein, passage to the left with his head bent the wrong way—i.e. to the right. If the horse is in movement, he will move obliquely and forward to the left. This rein, in conjunction with the leg, is most useful in preventing a horse throwing his quarters to one side.

N.B.—(Figs. 2 and 4, Plate XVI). These reins may be used to assist the rider to control the horse's hindquarters, i.e. to check the horse's hindquarters from flying out of the track when reining back. They may be used in many other movements to assist the rider to control the horse's hindquarters, especially with a horse that will not obey the leg. However, it must never be used in a perfectly trained horse that has been taught to turn on the haunches.

THE AIDS

IN order to obtain uniformity, young horses should be trained to obey these aids only, though it should be realised that it is quite possible to teach a horse different ones.

The common faults of all bad riders when applying aids are below, and should be avoided:

1. Looking down at the canter to see if the horse is on the right leg.
2. Throwing the weight about violently.
3. Violent and improper application of the spur.
4. Hard and bad handling of the horse's mouth.

1. *Collect the Horse.*

Make the horse stand, walk, trot, or canter at attention. Make the horse bring his hocks under him by a pressure of both legs at the same time; cause him to flex and give his jaw by an equal feeling of the reins.

2. *Walk.*

Ease both reins, close both legs. When the horse moves at the required pace, relax the pressure of the legs and feel the reins as required.

3. *Trot.*

The same as "Walk," applied as required.

4. *Walk from Trot.*

Close both legs, then feel both reins at the same time, leaning the body slightly back. When the horse is at the required pace, relax the feeling of the reins; at the same time bring the body to the normal position in the saddle.

5. *Halt.*

Close both legs, then feel both reins; at the same time bring the weight of the body slightly back. As soon as the horse halts, hands, legs and body resume their former position. If a horse swings his quarters to either side when halting, he must be checked by a pressure of either leg as required.

6. *Canter ; Off Fore Leading.*

Collect the horse, turn his head slightly to the left with the left rein, lean the body slightly backwards to the left, and cause the horse to strike off at a canter with a strong pressure of both legs, left leg the stronger. As soon as the horse is cantering true and united, change the bend

to the direction in which he is moving, and resume the normal position in the saddle.

Canter ; Near Fore Leading.

Reverse the above aids.

The canter is a pace of three time, and when the off fore leads the footfalls are in the following sequence:

1. Near hind.
2. Near fore and near hind.
3. Off fore.

When cantering on a circle to the right, the off fore must lead; similarly when cantering to the left, the near fore leads, followed by the near hind; a horse is then described as cantering "true." If a horse, when cantering to the right and leading with the off fore, follows with the near hind, the horse is said to be cantering "disunited," and if when cantering to one hand the horse, though cantering united, leads with the opposite leg, he is said to be cantering "false."

7. *Gallop.*

As for "Canter." The rider should sit down in the saddle, and keep an increased pressure of the legs, which should remain quite still, just behind the girths, the movements of the hands and body accompanying those of the horse, the forward thrust being taken off by the muscular pliability of the rider's back.

8. *Rein Back.*

Collect the horse, feel his mouth as an indication to step backwards, at the same time lean the body slightly forward. When the horse is taking a step backwards the rider must relax the feeling of the reins, retaining the pressure of the legs to keep the horse collected. The foregoing must be repeated for each step. The rider must never have a continuous pull on the horse's mouth. The trained horse should rein back in a collected manner with his head held fairly high. He should move in a straight line, and not be allowed to get behind his bit or run back out of hand, but should make each movement in obedience to the rider's indication. He must not be allowed to halt in an unbalanced position.

9. *Right Turn.*

Lead the horse's forehand to the right rein with a strong pressure of the left leg to prevent displacement of the hind-quarters; lean the body slightly back and to the right, off hind being the pivot of the turn. This aid can be used for turns at all paces, including the halt.

10. *Change.*

At the canter the weight should not be thrown violently to the side in order to make the horse change his leg, as bad riders commonly do. This only has the effect of changing the horse in front. On the contrary, the correct aids for cantering on the new rein, the body will have to

be brought back and slightly to the opposite side of the new leading leg, and the horse collected and brought back to his hocks.

11. *Right Turn on the Forehand. Right Turn on the Centre.*

These turns are not to be used, as a horse uses them naturally; and if constantly used, a horse becomes awkward to ride and heavy on the forehand.

12. *Right Passage.*

Bend the horse to the right by a feeling of the right rein, then cause him to passage to the right, with the forehand slightly leading and the legs crossing in front by a pressure of the left leg. Both legs should be used as required to keep the horse up to the bit and maintain the correct position as described above. The right rein is used to keep the horse bent; the left rein is only to be used in conjunction with the right to prevent the horse moving forward.

The horse must be bent at the poll sufficiently for the rider to see his right eye. To do this, the hands must be held low and kept in the correct place, and not, as is frequently seen, crossing each other over the withers.

13. *Right Half Passage.*

Bend the horse to the right with a feeling of the right rein; pressure of the left leg, supported by the right, will cause the horse to move forward and to the right by placing

the near fore and near hind in front of the off fore and off hind. The weight of the body must be slightly to the right. The only difference between the right half passage and the right passage is that the horse gains ground to the front as well as moving to a flank.

14. *Points to be Observed when Jumping.*

That the horse is collected and brought up to the obstacle very quietly, but with determination. Small obstacles are cleared just as easily from a trot as from a canter, with the additional advantage of keeping a horse quiet. That the rider preserves a correct balance, and does not disturb that of his horse. That a slight bearing of the rein is maintained to collect the horse, care being taken that the movements of the rider's hands accompany those of the horse, so as not to restrict the action of the head and neck. That the pressure of the leg is increased in giving the horse the "office" to take off. That the rider's eyes are directed over the fence, because the hand follows the eye and the horse follows the rein.

(The chief factor in jumping is the determination of the rider to clear the obstacle. Any indecision in the mind of a man is immediately communicated to a nervous horse.)

APPENDIX II

PHYSICAL TRAINING EXERCISES MOUNTED

THE object of Mounted Physical Training is to develop suppleness and all the muscles necessary for riding. The exercises should be carried out individually for short periods only, but as vigorously as possible. Anything in the nature of drill should be avoided. They should be made as easy as possible to begin with by starting them at a stationary position. As the beginner gets stronger so should the exercises be made more difficult by doing them at the walk, trot, and finally, the canter. When they can be done without fatigue or inconvenience at all paces they may be dropped and reverted to only as a refresher.

1. For Physical Exercises—"Ready."—Arms hanging loosely by the sides.
Remainder of the body showing the correct seat and position, outlined in Chapter IV.
"Relax."—Relax all gripping muscles, and allow the toes to droop.
"Grip." —Raise toes and grip correctly.
"Relax."—and so on.

2. Leg Swinging Forwards and Backwards.

“Commence ”

The lower legs should be swung vigorously forward and backward without altering seat and position.

“Steady ”

3. Body Swinging Forwards—“One.”

Upright —“Two.”

Back —“Three.”

One.—The body should be swung forward without hollowing the back or losing position of seat.

Two.—Return to normal position.

Three.—The body should swing back without hollowing the back until the rider can only just see between the horse's ears. The head and eyes should be kept looking in this manner throughout the exercises.

4. “Left Arm Upward Stretch.” (I)

Touch Left Toe and back to (I).

The Right
Leg

“Right Arm Upward Stretch. (II).

Touch Right Toe and back to (II)

The Left
Leg.

is liable to
slip back on
bending down

5. Body Turning—To the Right.

Forward.

Maintain Seat.

To the Left.

Forward.

APPENDIX III

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME OF EQUITATION COURSE

<i>Lessons.</i>	<i>Passive Stage.</i>
1-10.	Walking, Trotting, with stirrups, following an Instructor. Single rein only. Cantering as above when able to rise at the trot. Mounting and Dismounting. Fitting of Stirrups. (Dismounted and Mounted.)
10-20.	Walking. Short spells of Trotting without stirrups. Trotting and Cantering with stirrups and with loose rein. Balance and Gripping Exercises at the halt and walk. Lengthening and Shortening Reins and Stirrups on the Move. Passive Jumping.
20-40.	Trotting, Cantering and Cantering Out, without stirrups. Balance Exercises at all paces. Wrist Exercises. Loose Rein Riding at all paces. Riding with two reins. Progressive Passive Jumping. Lectures on Horsemastership and Saddle fitting.
40-60.	Preparation for Active Riding. General Repetition and polish up of work done. Lectures on the following: Hands, Legs (and the combination of Hand and Leg.) Collection and Biting. Preparation for Active Jumping. (Snaffle only.)

<i>Lessons.</i>	<i>Active Stage.</i>
60-70.	Turns at Walk and Trot. Changing the diagonal. Changing leading leg by breaking down to trot from canter. Turning on the haunches. Active Jumping over small fences.
70-100.	Turns at Walk, Trot and Canter. Reining back. Passaging at Walk. Miscellaneous figures at Walk and Trot. Fig. of 8 at the Canter. Active Jumping over larger fences.
100-110.	Miscellaneous Figures at all paces. Half Passage at Trot and Canter. Rapid changes of pace. Riding with reins in one hand. Jumping awkward fences.
110-120.	Changing the leading leg on a straight line. General polish up of entire course. Practice in riding difficult horses. Riding across country.

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